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# BRUCE'S SCHOOL

WITH

A PEEP AT NEWCASTLE IN THE  
'FIFTIES.





"How dear to my heart are the scenes of my childhood."—*Samuel Woodworth.*



BRUCE'S SCHOOL.

"All, all are gone, the old familiar places."—*Charles Lamb* (adapted).

"Alack the change! in vain I look for haunts in which my boyhood trifled."—*W. M. Praed.*



# BRUCE'S SCHOOL

WITH

A PEEP AT NEWCASTLE  
IN THE 'FIFTIES

BY

ARCHIBALD REED

---

*WITH PORTRAITS AND VIEWS*

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7 HALL TERRACE,  
GATESHEAD-ON-TYNE,  
13th January 1903.

DEAR SIR,

At our last Executive Committee Meeting, it was agreed that as many as possible of the speeches and other records given at our Annual Dinners of the "Old Boys" should be printed in pamphlet form.

Mr. Young and I would like if you would take this matter into your own hands and carry it through.

Yours very truly,

J. H. GIBSON,  
*Hon. Secretary.*

To ARCHIBALD REED, Esq.,  
Stocksfield House,  
Stocksfield-on-Tyne.



## PREFACE.

---

UNDER ordinary circumstances I should certainly have hesitated before attempting to respond to the invitation of my Co-committeemen to gather up a record of our School's history; but knowing the pleasure it will afford many of those friends who have taken such an interest in the doings of Dr. Bruce's Old Boys, I shall endeavour to pen some Records of the Percy Street Academy, and doings at the Old Boys' Annual Dinners. However imperfect they may appear to some readers, it is better that they be placed on record incompletely than eventually lost entirely. My great difficulty is the absence of any notes whatever of our earlier Annual Dinners, and most incomplete memoranda of the more recent ones. The notes which were obtainable from the daily newspapers were such as the reporters considered most interesting to the general public; but the Old Boys themselves had different notions, and time after time suggested that something should be done to have the speeches, etc., preserved. Acting on the principle of that which is everybody's work is nobody's, we found ourselves year after year no better

## Preface

off than we were in the previous year. But it is astonishing how some words take deep root when the heart is open to receive them. I hope therefore to be able, with a little assistance from others equally interested, to reproduce, if not actually to the letter, at least with no very material alteration of meaning, some little data of the past history of our school, which runs the risk of being lost amid the dim vista of the past. For such assistance, readily forthcoming, I am deeply indebted to several Old Boys.

In dedicating these pages to the beloved memory of Dr. Bruce, I feel, in the autumn of life, that great pleasure in the reflective vista of youthful times which is indescribably more delightful than can be hoped for in the future of this life.

ARCHIBALD REED.

*Xmas, 1903.*

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## BRUCE'S SCHOOL.

"If you can look into the seeds of time,  
And say which grain will grow, and which will not."

—SHAKESPEARE.

THIS pregnant couplet raises in one's breast new life and vigour. It seems like a few short years since it was so familiar to the ear, a time when the circumference of Newcastle proper was less than six miles. Yet is the writer thinking of fifty years ago, after his first day at a "new school." The hour of liberation has come, and with 200 other day-boys he is rushing and screaming into St. Thomas Street, and in a very few moments all are moving in various directions homeward bound, feeling a decided gain over the boarders left behind. The shrill, piercing sounds of these merry voices can never die so long as memory lasts. Such is a memory of Bruce's School in the 'fifties; but what was it long before that period?

The founder of the school, Mr. John Bruce, was a most successful teacher of youth, first in Alnwick, his native town, and afterwards in Newcastle. He was the author of a work on geography which obtained a very wide circulation, and he was also

## Bruce's School

the compiler of other elementary works. At the time of his death on 31st October 1834, at the age of sixty years, he had, in conjunction with his son, the Rev. John Collingwood Bruce, the direction of one of the most extensive and flourishing seminaries in the North of England. His funeral, which took place on the 5th of November, was attended by a large number of the principal inhabitants of Newcastle and neighbourhood. Soon afterwards an elegant monument, designed by Mr. J. Green, was placed in Westgate Cemetery over his remains, at the cost of his friends and pupils.

**THE REV. J. C. (afterwards DR.) BRUCE'S** education in youth was of a high order, for, not satisfied with the training his own school in Percy Street afforded, his father sent him to a celebrated school in London, where he became fully equipped for entering college. His classical, mathematical, and philosophical studies were carried on in the Glasgow University; and his theological studies were pursued under Professors Mitchell and Dick, in the Theological Institute of the Presbyterian Church. Though he never took a settled ministerial pastorate, for which in many respects he was so admirably qualified, yet his love for theological study remained with him throughout life. His life was largely spent in the highly honourable vocation of teaching, and scarcely ever was any master held in higher estimation and honour by his

## Rev. J. C. Bruce

pupils than Dr. Bruce was by his. His vast stores of information, his kindness of disposition, and his sterling uprightness of character gained the respect of those whom he sought to instruct, and made him honoured and beloved by all. His ever-growing fame, popularity, and public usefulness were the glory and boast of his pupils, and not a few in all parts of the world were proud to own that they had been at "Bruce's School."

"Whate'er he did, was done with so much ease,  
In him alone, 'twas natural to please."

—JOHN DRYDEN.

Dr. Bruce's arduous and continuous labours as a painstaking and successful instructor of youth did not prevent him from devoting his mind to studies of a kind which were not so common when he commenced them as they have since become, and in the course of time he became one of the most celebrated antiquarians of the age. Roman antiquities were his favourite study, a subject on which he ultimately became an authority. His book on the *Roman Wall* is a standard work of its kind, and is destined to remain such for many years to come. His genius as an antiquary led his *Alma Mater*, the University of Glasgow, to confer upon him the well-merited dignity of LL.D., in the year 1851. In after years his attainments were suitably acknowledged by other colleges and universities. Of the poets, he was a great admirer of John Milton, William

## Bruce's School

Cowper, and Chaucer. He was specially fond of biography, and loved to descant upon the lives of such men as Robert Moffat and David Livingstone, whom he numbered among his personal friends. All his published writings, lectures, and sermons have traces of high culture, and his style has a strength and beauty which enchains the mind and fascinates the heart of the reader.

What the Newcastle Infirmary owes to Dr. Bruce few persons know: what time and money and attention he gave to it, what a living and loving interest he took in its patients. He called it the "Home of Mercy." His sympathy followed the patients to their homes. He was emphatically the poor man's friend, and this largely accounted for the unique place that he held in the affections of the people of Newcastle-on-Tyne. Amid every sign of mourning, the remains of the late Rev. Dr. John Collingwood Bruce were interred in the family vault in Jesmond Old Cemetery, Newcastle-on-Tyne, on Friday, May 8th, 1892.

**THE REV. GILBERT ROBERTSON, M.A.,** next claims attention, as he was, from his first arrival at the Percy Street Academy, so closely associated with Dr. Bruce. Mr. Robertson came into residence in 1851, and within two months after his joining the school Dr. Bruce wished to enter into a long term of engagement with him, but Mr. Robertson at that time had set his mind upon going abroad



REV. GILBERT ROBERTSON, M.A.





## Rev. Gilbert Robertson

as a missionary on the completion of his theological course. No Old Boy needs to be reminded how harmoniously the Doctor and Mr. Robertson worked for the good of their young charges. It is not within the limit of words to convey to those who were unacquainted with Mr. Robertson an adequate idea of his great value in such a school as Percy Street Academy. He was probably the best mathematician Newcastle ever knew, but, in addition, he had a decided faculty to convey to others (who gave reasonable attention to his teaching) a thorough grounding in all branches of mathematics, proofs being in existence to-day of boys at the age of twelve having passed from the ordinary problems of Euclid, mensuration, and algebra to the advance classes of trigonometry, statics, hydrostatics, and logarithms before they were fifteen years of age, and Mr. Robertson's marks at the end of such exercises proclaim their correctness or otherwise. After the jubilee of the school, Mr. Robertson joined the Doctor in partnership, under the style of Bruce & Robertson; but in 1859 Dr. Bruce finally retired, and Mr. Robertson conducted the school on his own account and in his own name until 1881. It is well known that Dr. Bruce could not, after his retirement, entirely abandon the "old familiar place," and not unfrequently would he wander through some of the rooms and have an encouraging word for some of the lads. On occasion it might be to congratulate a boy at "the top," or perhaps to try and coax one at the other end to reverse

## Bruce's School

positions with the one at the top before his next visit. Dr. Bruce's kindly word always left its stamp at the "right end" of such boys. The dear old Doctor was a rare judge of character, and took every care to satisfy himself which art would have most effect upon his pupil. Mr. Robertson was more demonstrative, possibly owing to his boys having had the roughness taken off before being passed on to him. If he used his lancewood pointer on a boy's leg instead of the blackboard, he never overdid his chastisement as some schoolmasters of that period did. One good rap and then a look, once seen never to be forgotten; he would not admit of a liberty, however slight—unless it was from poor Frank Jacob, who was always in mischief but never in vice. Frank many a time courted punishment for the fun of the thing, and got it, but always with a smile from dear old "Nix." Mr. Robertson died within twelve months after his retirement.

**JOHN GARVEN**, the classical master of Percy Street Academy, could not possibly have fallen into worse hands than ours if justice were to be done to his memory, as it would be the most extravagant folly for us to presume to offer an opinion upon his attainments as a scholar and teacher of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Fortunately, the premier object of these lines is to bring our dear old tutor before old friends, which relieves us of the necessity of an introduction. Mr. Garven was a native of Alnwick, and came to Newcastle

## John Garven

when a very young boy, and although at first it would appear that his birthplace being the same as that of the first John Bruce might account for their closer connection in after years, yet this was not so. He studied Latin and Greek under the Rev. Mr. Bell in Newcastle, and at the early age of twenty-one years became classical teacher at Dr. Bruce's, where he taught for forty-five years with scarcely a day's absence, beyond the ordinary holidays. He was of a most sensitive nature, and mild in temperament and manner beyond description. His voice was of that mild, sweet, lisping tone, with full expression of feeling, that could not fail to convey to the hearts of those boys *willing to learn* all that a parent or guardian could desire them to know. Where is the Old Boy that can forget his lisping out, after having told them some interesting story, "Yes, boys, let us consider," etc.? But if a boy had no head for learning, Mr. Garven was not one physically constituted to drive it in at the other end. It was recorded in some of the local newspapers at the time of his death that Dr. Bruce had, in one of his works on the Roman Wall, paid tribute to Mr. Garven for on many occasions having rendered valuable assistance in their discussions upon the many and varied antiquarian incidents that came to their knowledge, and especially mentioned Mr. Garven's ingenuity of interpretation and accurate scholarship. He was a man of very retiring habits, little known, and hardly heard of outside his own particular circle. It is worthy of mention that when the writer called upon a

## Bruce's School

relative of Mr. Garven's to gather a few facts, if possible, connected with his private life, he found evidences of his having been in his leisure-time studying Italian and German, besides occasional unfinished lines of poetry. Happily, there were also one or two finished poems, which it is a great pleasure to be able to reproduce and preserve. Mr. Garven died in the year 1888, aged seventy-three years, after having lived in retirement some few years. It therefore would appear, from his having been forty-five years at Percy Street, that he must have joined the school in Mr. John Bruce's time, shortly before his death in 1834.

"His best companion, innocence and health;  
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth."

—GOLDSMITH.

### WORK, MY BOYS, WORK!

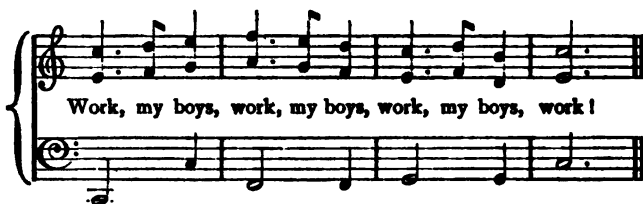
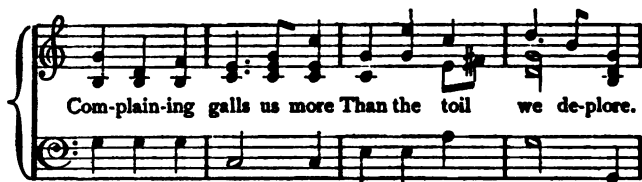
Music by T. IONS, M.B.

La-bour's or-dain'd of heav'n, Nought without pains is giv'n.

Work, my boys, work, my boys, work, my boys, work!

The image shows a musical score for two systems. Each system consists of a treble and bass staff joined by a brace. The first system has the lyrics 'La-bour's or-dain'd of heav'n, Nought without pains is giv'n.' The second system has the lyrics 'Work, my boys, work, my boys, work, my boys, work!'. The music is in 2/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The notation includes various note values, rests, and a repeat sign at the end of the second system.

# John Garven



3

Labour is hon'able,  
Sloth's mean and despicable.  
Work, my boys, work!

4

Temptation to avoid,  
'Tis best to be employ'd.  
Work, my boys, work!

5

Labour brings happiness,  
Peace, wealth, and healthiness.  
Work, my boys, work!

9

# Bruce's School

6

Sweet's the repose that's giv'n  
To those who've nobly striv'n.

Work, my boys, work !

JOHN GARVEN.

## JESMOND DENE.

Joyous we come, as was our wont,  
To paths beside the pilgrims' shrine;  
The height, the vale of Jesumont,  
May yet inspire with thoughts divine;  
Sweet memories wake, and childhood's dreams  
Revive amidst these woods and streams.

Here had I found a fairy-land,  
Home of the butterfly and bee;  
And watched the minnow from the strand  
Of waters surging like a sea,  
'Neath rocky clefts where crane's-bill grew  
And ferns superb their shadows threw.

Oft here, when flowers in beauty shine,  
And woods their summer vesture wear,  
Sir William<sup>1</sup> and his lady join  
In festive joys that orphans share;  
With generous impulse ever kind,  
As well beseems a noble mind.

<sup>1</sup> Subsequently first Lord Armstrong.



JOHN GARVEN.





# John Garven

Still shall the pilgrim, lingering near  
The ruined shrine, the sacred well,  
Yon mansion and those scenes revere  
Where worth and genius loved to dwell,  
And read in future years his name  
Inscribed in Britain's roll of fame.

JOHN GARVEN.

## SPRING FLOWERS.

Sweetly the flowers bloom,  
Thy eldest daughters, bounteous Earth;  
Mercy revokes thy ancient doom,  
And spares thee still thy primal birth.

Eden revives again,  
As freshening verdure spreads around;  
Memorials of her golden reign  
Bedeck the gaily dappled ground.

Emblems of innocence!  
Disclose where lies your mystic grace;  
Here charms of art would give offence,  
Like paint upon a lovely face.

Softly your voices tell  
That simple truth's a priceless dower;  
That stainlessness is beauty's spell,  
And purity her hidden power.

## Bruce's School

Nurslings of genial Spring!  
Methinks immortal ye might flourish;  
Ye, too, have felt death's fatal sting,  
Full soon your silken leaflets perish.

Seers inspired of old,  
Oft musing on your swift decay,  
Beheld men of divinest mould,  
Mortality's defenceless prey.

Hopes of high-minded youth!  
Spring-tide flowers of life are ye;  
Successful work, triumphant truth,  
Young eyes in distant vistas see.

Flowers rise beneath our feet,  
Bright youthful hopes can never die;  
These deck with bloom death's winding-sheet,  
Those germs grow ripe in yonder sky.

JOHN GARVEN.

*March 25th, 1861.*

**THE SCHOOL** needs no description for the benefit of the Old Boys themselves, as it would be an outrage on their memories to suppose they have outlived their recollections of it; but, as "All, all are gone, the old familiar places," these Records would be far from complete if only the view of Dr. Bruce's private residence were allowed to represent the school as it was in the

## The School

'fifties. At the back of the house a range of buildings was erected at right angles to Percy Street, and parallel to St. Thomas Street, set sufficiently back to allow of a large open space for playgrounds. This range of schoolrooms, kitchens, and other offices was about eighty yards in length, containing eleven rooms. Let us enter by the iron gates in the low yard opposite the boarders' dining-room, then turn into the middle yard and pass into the stone-flagged lobby, with its many rows of hat-pegs, and then for a moment look into the little room on the right-hand side—Mr. Garven's room. It was a little room; even the forms were little, or at least low compared with others, and presided over by a little man, who might be pardoned for claiming Watts's verse to have been written for him:—

“ Were I so tall to reach the pole,  
Or grasp the ocean with my span,  
I must be measur'd by my soul :  
The mind's the standard of the man.”

We now wander up the old stone-steps, with their strong iron railings. Half-way up, a turn to the right took you to the writing-room, a very long room with windows to the extent of ten or twelve, overlooking the middle yard, and conducted by Mr. Scott, famous in the late 'forties or early 'fifties for his caligraphy, and dreaded for his strap with the burnt-end, the recollection of which not being so agreeable to the writer we will proceed along the passage at the point we deviated from, to

## Bruce's School

inspect the other rooms, and cautiously take a peep at the teachers' room, where Mr. Lundeberg taught German; then we pass into the mathematical-room (Mr. Robertson's), and on through two similar rooms back to the domicile. The three last schoolrooms were capable of being thrown into one large examination-hall, capable of seating on an examination-day three hundred or more parents and visitors, between whom and the boys, who were seated on graduated rising benches, was a platform, on which the boys had to go through a public trial, as, in addition to the pieces prepared, any visitor was permitted to put questions, one in particular availing himself occasionally of testing the senior boys. This was the Rev. David Cunningham Browning, father of a fine lot of lads at the school, of whom probably "Grumphy" was the pet of the playground, and frequently referred to in after-life by his old "chums." Another boy, "Jimmy" Thorburn—now the Rev. J. B. Thorburn, of Widdrington, Northumberland—was always an attraction on the platform, dressed "wi' kilt and sporran" (as in every-day life), and reciting "My name is Norval," etc., and other similar pieces.

**THE PLAYGROUNDS** are worthy of mention, as being most ample, and far greater in extent than those of any other local school, either before or since, embracing, as they did, about 1100 square yards. The low yard (about 250-300 square yards) was flagged, and mostly used by the small boys for

## The Playgrounds

tops, etc., but in winter for long slides when the ice permitted. The middle yard was about 240-260 square yards, with a good bottom of rolled, ground burnt-brick from Kenton, with a shed as a protection on wet days. The high yard, of 500-600 square yards, with a bottom of rolled cinders like a running-path, was the battle-ground of the senior boys, whose games were of the rough-and-tumble kind—"bed-stocks," "shinny" (a very rough hockey, when at times a boy's ankle did duty for the ball if he did not "shin-his-side" quickly), and last, but not least, "one-catch-all," which was a game peculiar to "Bruceites." A mark was drawn at top and bottom of the yard to form what was called a "bay" at each end. The players, sixty or more, occupied the "bay" at one end, while *one boy* stood in the middle space between the "bays"; then the whole lot ran from "bay" to "bay," the solitary boy having to catch, as best he could, any of the others. The boy caught now went alone into the middle, and the first boy joined those in the "bays," and so the game went on, *every boy caught thereafter remaining in the middle*; so their numbers rapidly increased, and it can easily be imagined, when the strength of the middle grew so that the "*bays*" *were left with only three or four survivors*, what kind of play it was making from one "bay" to the other. Neither facial appearance nor clothing were in the least considered if getting through was at all likely to be accomplished. Only once did one boy "catch all." It might have been

## Bruce's School

repeated had not the Doctor put his veto on the game, he having had so many complaints from parents and guardians respecting the boys' damaged clothing, and so ended the best of all games.

“ By sports like these are all their cares beguil'd :  
The sports of children satisfy the child.”

—GOLDSMITH.

## ABOUT SOME OLD BOYS.

**ROBERT STEPHENSON** claims first attention, not only from his brilliant career in after-life as civil and mechanical engineer, but as having received his education under Mr. John Bruce, the founder of the Percy Street Academy, and therefore a pupil of the older school. Any reader requiring an exhaustive history of the Stephensons would be best served by consulting the pages of the *Life of Robert Stephenson*, by J. Cordy Jeaffreson and William Pole (1864), from which I take the liberty of quoting:—

“The friend and biographer of Dr. Hutton, and the author of several educational works of great merit, Mr. John Bruce had raised his school to such excellence that it ranked higher than the Newcastle Grammar School, where Lord Stowell, Lord Eldon, and Lord Collingwood received their early instruction. ‘The Percy Street Academy’—as Mr. Bruce’s seminary was, and still is, called—was then attended by more than a hundred pupils, who might be described as a good style of ‘middle-class boys.’ Some few were the sons of the minor gentry of the vicinity, but the majority were the sons of professional men and traders of New-

## Bruce's School

castle and Gateshead. Not one-half of the boys learned either Greek or Latin. Amongst those who did not receive classical instruction was Robert Stephenson, who entered the school on August 14th, 1815, and remained there four years. During that time, the whole sum paid for his education fell short of £40. The expenditure, therefore, for a father in George Stephenson's circumstances, was sufficient and appropriate, but nothing more. On Robert Stephenson's appearance at the Percy-Street Academy he had to encounter the criticisms of lads who regarded him as beneath them in social condition. A thin-framed, thin-faced, delicate boy, with his face covered with freckles; Mr. Bruce was on the look-out to see that he was not improperly annoyed; but there was no need for the master's interference. In Robert's dark eyes there was a soft light of courtesy that conciliated the elder boys. At first Robert Stephenson walked to and from school, a distance in all of about ten miles; but it soon became clear that Robert was not strong enough to bear the long walk each night and morning, so a step was taken by George Stephenson, likely to do him good—namely, the purchase of a donkey which was for years the pride of Longbenton. . . .

“Before leaving Robert Stephenson's school-life, we may remark that his father's experience and difficulties were the measure of what he thought requisite for the instruction for his son. The subtler influence of letters, and the more valuable results of culture, were matters





ROBERT STEPHENSON.



## Robert Stephenson

about which George Stephenson thought little. Learning he regarded in a strictly utilitarian sense, as an engine necessary for the achievement of certain ends. What he desired to be himself, he also wished his son to be—Robert Stephenson should be an engineer and a director of labour; but he should not have his bravest exertions baffled by defective knowledge. In this spirit George caused his son to learn French because it would be useful to him in business. Up to the time when he left Bruce's school, Robert did not exhibit any marked enthusiasm for the pursuits in which his father was most warmly interested. Possibly George Stephenson was too urgent that he should prosecute the study of mechanics, and by continually goading him to work harder and harder 'at his buiks,' gave him a transient distaste for subjects to which he was naturally inclined."

To avoid being wearisome I will leave the history of Stephenson's life, and only now refer to the delightful connection that sprang up in after-life between Sir George Barclay Bruce and Robert Stephenson in bridge-building, commencing at Berwick-upon-Tweed and expanding beyond the seas to Canada and elsewhere. To the sensitive nature of Robert Stephenson this association with a member of the Bruce family must have been very charming, as we see when we refer for a moment to his remarks when engaged in laying out the Stockton and Darlington Railway, 1821 (again quoting Jeaffreson):—

## Bruce's School

"Mr. Joseph Pease of Darlington, then a young man, was a frequent attendant on the party, and remembers well the animation with which George and Robert Stephenson conversed at the top of their voices, in a scarcely-intelligible Northumbrian brogue, on the difficulties of their undertaking. The 'slight, spare, bronzed boy,' as Mr. Pease recalls the Robert Stephenson of 1821, often supported his arguments with a respectful mention of Mr. Bruce's opinions; and to the authority of the worthy schoolmaster, George Stephenson invariably paid marked, and almost superstitious, homage."

It may be said of Robert Stephenson, he came home to roost, for in the year 1858 he visited the north, and took sincere pleasure in going over all the haunts of his boyhood. He called at the old house at Killingworth, where still remained some of his father's articles of furniture, and astonished the occupant by telling her of a secret drawer in a cabinet or bookcase, which she refused to believe until he touched the button and the drawer flew open. Alas! it was empty, Robert remarking, "I *should* know it is there, for my father made it." Just about this time he paid his last visit to his father's birthplace at Wylam—the little stone house one sees from the Newcastle and Hexham Railway looking over to the north side of the Tyne. Robert Stephenson died a comparatively young man in 1859, only fifty-six years of age, but what an amount of brilliant work was crowded

## Philip A. Berkley

into that life can only be ascertained by making a study of his life and his great works, reflecting the greatest credit upon one of Bruce's "old boys" of the older school.

Another Old Boy writes:—

PARKSIDE,

JESMOND PARK, EAST,

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE,

*December 27th, 1902.*

DEAR MR. GIBSON,—Thanks for your letter of December 12th, which was duly received. I had some talk with Sir George Bruce a few weeks since; he mentioned my brother William as being at school with him. My brother Cuthbert was also there at that time, who is the only elder brother living now. I went to Bruce's School the same year that Sir George Bruce left, 1836. Miss Bruce (Annie) was my teacher; Robert Bruce ("Bobbie") was also one of my early teachers. Then there was Mr. Garven ("Bettie"). I recollect an instance when "Bettie" was going to cane me, that I got under the table. I was a very little fellow, and he told another boy, John Ingledew (son of the late Alderman Ingledew and the brother of the late James Ingledew), to bring me out; but I think I conquered. My recollections of Miss Annie Bruce are very pleasant, especially her reading to us in the afternoons out of a book—"Cottagers of Glenburnie," "Mrs. McClarty," "I Cannot be Fashed"—I have never forgotten. Few,

## Bruce's School

very few, of my old schoolfellows remain—John David Scott, Sam Watson, Peter Brown, Sir Gainsford Bruce, Jack Scott (of Bainbridge's). Then old Mr. Richardson and his two sons, T. M. and Harry, also taught drawing. Mr. Moffat, son of the late great African missionary, was our teacher in mechanical drawing. My recollections of the Rev. John Collingwood Bruce are very pleasant. In after years I went to see if he would preach for us at Willington. His reply was, "I have had to give up preaching; but for your sake, Philip, I will come." I trust you will have a pleasant meeting with Bruce's Old Boys, but my health prevents me joining you.

Yours truly,

PHILIP A. BERKLEY.

**EDWARD WESTLEY JACOB** claims first notice of the Old Boys of the 'fifties as gold-medallist in the jubilee year 1856, he being the Senior Prize Winner, on which occasion Dr. Bruce departed from the usual custom of giving books as prizes to the head boy of each class, and Jacob was the "hero of the school" on that occasion. Those boys who remember the excitement, for weeks before the examination-day, look with pride now upon an old schoolfellow who continued to improve upon the ground-work so successfully established at Percy Street Academy. In all Mr. Jacob's writings and utterances he never fails to remember what he is pleased to call his indebtedness to Dr. Bruce, Mr. Robertson, and Mr. Garven, which is most gratify-

## Edward Westley Jacob

ing to all whose recollection of those days (the spring-time of their career) is revived by our Annual Dinners; the more so as these assemblies have been the means of bringing together many old comrades after forty to forty-five years' separation. In some instances even the very existence of each other was unknown, and in not a few cases the re-unions have been of a most affectionate nature. Many, naturally, are missing from various causes; but it has been the endeavour of the Dinners Committee and their Hon. Secretary to gather as many as could be discovered, none being wilfully overlooked. At the same time, should the author of these pages commence to particularise—except in the most distinguished cases—it would become nauseous to his readers, notwithstanding the many eminent men of letters and members of the various learned professions who can, like Mr. Jacob, lay claim to having had the foundation of their knowledge first grounded at Percy Street. But we are at present dealing with a boy who was eminent “as a boy,” and continued meritoriously so afterwards; not, as frequently happens, an unpromising youth turning out a brilliant man in after-life. After leaving school Mr. Jacob applied himself to engineering, in which business he achieved success upon success, but possibly none greater than while acting as Secretary and Experimentalist to Mr. William Fairbairn, M.I.C.E. (afterwards Sir William Fairbairn, Bart.), at the time of the Scientific Commission for determining the mechanical properties of the Atlantic Cable, and de-

## Bruce's School

ciding the particulars of manufacture, strength, and disposal of materials, and finally selecting the cable to be laid in place of the 1864 Cable, which was a failure owing to difficulties which arose from the great elasticity of the wires of the outer covering. In many instances, when this cable was being laid, several coils of cable would simultaneously leave the bed and so foul the guiding-pulleys overhead. It was on one of these occasions that the 1864 Cable snapped and the end was lost overboard. At the experiments instituted, Mr. E. W. Jacob acted for Mr. W. Fairbairn, with Mr. Samuel Canning (afterwards Sir Samuel Canning, Bart.) on behalf of the Telegraph Company, for the Scientific Commissioners of the 1866 Atlantic Cable, the object being to attain the maximum of strength for the outer covering with "dead wires." The cable finally selected by the Commission from the experimented cables gave excellent results in coiling, uncoiling, and paying out, and was successfully laid. Mr. Jacob, at this time, was quite a young man, as it was only about ten years after he had carried off the Bruce Jubilee Gold Medal; and consequently acting only as an assistant, had not the same freedom of speech at the meetings of the Commissioners as a principal, which made it extremely difficult for his experiments to be brought sufficiently to notice. Eventually, however, this was overcome, and Mr. Jacob's name in after-years was held in the highest esteem in engineering circles. He became manager at such works





**EDWARD WESTLEY JACOB, C.E.**

(GOLD MEDALLIST).



JUBILEE MEDAL.

## Edward Westley Jacob

as The Horsley Co., Limited, Ripton, Staffordshire ; Messrs. Hamilton & Co., Windsor Iron Works, Liverpool and Garston ; the Cleveland Bridge and Engineering Co., Darlington, etc., etc. It cannot fail to be interesting to some Old Boys to read the following letters:—

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE,

*January 19th, 1857.*

DEAR SIR,—The handsome present conveyed to me by the hands of your brother this morning gave me sincere pleasure. Your kindness demands my warmest acknowledgments. How well it is to be able to look back on the past with pleasure! I attribute the kind feeling which you have thus testified towards me in a great measure to your own dutifulness as a scholar. In consequence of this, your school-days have left—not dark shadows—but pleasing recollections behind them. Allow me to express a wish that you may meet the stern realities of life in the same spirit, and be able to look back upon them with satisfaction.

I am, dear Sir, yours faithfully,

JOHN GARVEN.

To Mr. Edward Jacob, Leeds.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE,

*19th August 1875.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am glad that a copy of the *Lapidarium*, on which I have spent so much time and toil, falls into the hands of one who will form so kindly

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## Robert Thorburn

eventually be successful. The long-looked-for day came at last, and Thorburn only captured the silver medal, but this was an achievement at so early an age as fourteen years. Whatever disappointment Thorburn may have felt at the time was amply compensated for two years later, when the first Oxford Local Examinations were thrown open to the public, and Robert Thorburn (official No., 48) was the only boy from the North of England who passed with honours in the second division in both English and Classics and gained the title of A.A. (Associate in Arts). Dr. Bruce did everything thoroughly, so he took his five pupils under his own protection and proceeded direct to Oxford, rather than take advantage of one of the nearer examination stations, of which Leeds was one. From the official printed returns I find that John Hope and Joseph Dickinson (Alston) both satisfied the examiners in three subjects, while Quelch passed in two and Edgcome in one—a very satisfactory return indeed. Thorburn adopted the medical profession, becoming M.D. (Edin.), and died in 1895. His brother James (the Rev. J. B. Thorburn of Widdrington) is still with us, and takes a right good interest in our annual dinners.

“Like leaves on trees the race of man is found,  
Now green in youth, now withering on the ground:  
Another race the following spring supplies;  
They fall successive, and successive rise.”

—POPE.

## THE JUBILEE DINNER OF DR. BRUCE'S SCHOOL, ON 10TH NOVEMBER 1855.

THE following full account, as taken for the *Gateshead Observer* at the time, has been kindly lent to the writer by Joseph A. Philipson, Esq., Solicitor, Newcastle:—

On Tuesday the old pupils of Percy Street Academy celebrated the jubilee of that institution by a dinner to the Principal, the Rev. John Collingwood Bruce, LL.D. The entertainment was provided at the Queen's Head Inn, Mr. Miller, the host, himself being an old pupil. The dinner was of a very sumptuous character, including every delicacy of the season, and wines of the choicest vintage. About one hundred gentlemen sat down. They comprised members of all the learned professions, many of the most distinguished merchants of the town and district, and several gentlemen from a distance, who had embraced this opportunity of renewing their acquaintances of their schoolboy days. The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Isaac L. Bell, Esq., presided, supported on his right by Dr. Bruce, Hugh Shield, Esq. (of London), John Fenwick, Esq., and John Dean, Esq. (of Staindrop); and on his left by John Clayton, Esq. (Town Clerk), his Honour Steuart Davies (Judge of the Supreme Court of St. Kitts), Rev. William Hawks, and Richard Cail, Esq. The Vice-Presidents were Robert Plummer, Esq., of

# The Jubilee Dinner

Newcastle, William Kell, Esq. (of Gateshead), and William Woodman, Esq. (of Morpeth).

After the cloth was withdrawn (grace having been said by the Rev. William Hawks), the MAYOR gave the health of "The Queen" (which was drunk with three times three). It was followed by that of "Prince Albert and the Rest of the Royal Family." In proposing "The Army and Navy," his Worship observed that on this occasion they were not favoured with the company of any representative either of the naval or military profession. He was not aware whether this arose from any peculiar instruction received at Percy Street Academy not being fitted for developing the warlike propensities of the pupils. (Hear, hear, and a laugh.) However, the company possessed an abundant field to excite their sympathy and warm it into admiration whenever the name either of the Army or Navy was mentioned. (Loud cheers.) The electric telegraph was continually giving us information of their great and unparalleled exertions. We had only to review their efforts in the Crimea or the Baltic to feel that the Army was still made of the same stuff which distinguished it under the command of a Wellington, a Marlborough, or at any other period. (Hear, hear.) They had had trying scenes to go through, and therefore we might be well satisfied with the achievements they had performed. (Applause.)

The MAYOR next proposed "The Bishop and Clergy of the Diocese," coupled with the health of the Rev. William Hawks. The toast was drunk amid loud cheers.

The Rev. WILLIAM HAWKS said that although he had ceased to be enrolled amongst the clergy of this diocese, he felt that he might be allowed to return thanks on their behalf; for he was sure the clergy at all times looked with great favour on those who were instrumental in rearing up men to fill situa-

## Bruce's School

tions of usefulness either in public or private life. (Applause.) They were met to celebrate the jubilee of a school which was begun under the auspices of a man now no more; but those who knew him would ever, till their latest breath, entertain a sincere respect for his memory. At a very early period after the late Mr. Bruce had established his school (continued Mr. Hawks), it was my good fortune to be introduced to him as a pupil; and I may say that almost the whole of my education was received under his roof. I feel grateful to him for that education, though perhaps I have not profited by it as others who were equally favoured. Many of my fellow-pupils have soared much higher than I could have expected to do in this world. But the instruction there given was calculated to make men shine in whatever situation of life they might enter upon, not only as ornaments of the profession they made choice of, but as ornaments of society. (Hear, hear.) For the education received at that school was of no ordinary kind. Although there were many institutions of that kind in this country, in which the classics were taught in a superior manner, yet I have met with old schoolfellows, who afterwards went to the university, who told me that having removed to other schools, they could testify that the general information they received from Mr. Bruce far surpassed what they had obtained in any other academy. (Applause.) It has just been mentioned by the Chairman that none of the profession of the Army or of the Navy is present. This is rather remarkable, for besides imparting the elements of a good education, the late Mr. Bruce always tried to rouse our patriotism; and when I had the pleasure of being in his school, many of his pupils were about to enter into the profession of the Army or the Navy. (Hear, hear.) I may mention William Thain, Pitts, both in the Army and Navy; Coulsons, both in the Army and Navy; Wilson,



## The Jubilee Dinner

Watsons, Fenwicks, Reeds, Swinburne, Blackett, Compton, and Bugg. Thain was at Bergen-op-Zoom, and at Waterloo, and afterwards aide-de-camp to General Elphinstone in the Afghan War; and in that retreat he lost his life. (Hear, hear.) I have been told that in that war his counsel was always good, and had it been followed, perhaps the disastrous consequences would not have ensued. Amongst the pupils of this school, we can number men who have distinguished themselves in both branches of the legal profession, and some of them we have with us to-day—men who will carry with them to the grave the character which, I believe, was formed in this seminary. (Applause.) We have likewise in the scientific world men who have highly distinguished themselves. It is much to be regretted that Mr. Robert Stephenson—(loud cheers)—from ill health, is not able to be present with us. (Hear, hear.) He sailed last week to Madeira to endeavour to recruit his health. On my left-hand is a gentleman highly distinguished in the scientific world; but to particularise is unnecessary. The late Mr. Bruce was intent, not only in making his boys scholars, but he also did that which I rejoice is more the fashion now than it used to be: he was beforehand in the work of cultivating religious principle in his pupils. (Applause.) Many of you will have read the sermons of Arnold, addressed to his pupils; and a similar volume by Sewell, Master of Marlborough College. Arnold said it was not sufficient to give a boy knowledge of classics; his mind must be furnished with a higher kind of knowledge. Our departed friend, Mr. Bruce, never lost sight of this. I can speak as one of his boarders. He watched more particularly over the morals of all the young men committed to his charge. It could never be said of him, as has been written of a very distinguished master of a distinguished school not one hundred miles from Shrewsbury,

## Bruce's School

that when he saw one of his pupils coming out of a public-house, he walked over the street. (Hear, hear.) Not so our departed friend. The slightest indiscretion met with his animadversion. I recollect we had a drill-sergeant, and some, who were training for the Army, looked with affection on his red coat, and not only gave him a shilling to drink, but accompanied him into the public-house—to see that he got his drink. (Laughter.) Mr. Bruce thought it very much below the dignity of his pupils to do this; and the young gentlemen got a punishment for the offence. (Hear, hear.) We all admit that the mere knowledge of Latin and Greek will not enable men to benefit society, and shed a lustre on the vicinity in which it may be their lot to be cast. (Hear, hear.) Mr. Hawks concluded by again returning thanks for the toast.

The MAYOR now rose and proposed "Prosperity to the Percy Street Academy." (Loud cheers.) He said he hoped they did not expect him either to enter into the history of this Academy, or give minute details of the causes of that prosperity—or even tell them how that prosperity continued under the presidency of his friend, Dr. Bruce. He was sure that their presence to-day must be in their own eyes, as it was in his, a proof of the great and beneficial results of the prosperity of the Academy in bygone years. (Applause.) But though it was not his intention to go into the history of the Academy, he could not but refer to some of the salient points in the history of a school which had risen to the first rank of scholastic institutions in this town and district. (Cheers.) They were as well aware as himself how much of the merit was due to the late Mr. Bruce. However they might admire some masterly touch or *coup d'etat*, by which great success in life was sometimes achieved, in their calmer moments they would chiefly dwell upon that success which was the result of

## The Jubilee Dinner

persevering and well-directed efforts and the dauntless overcoming of difficulties. No better standard of success could be afforded than that of the late Mr. Bruce. (Applause.) They all knew how humbly he began. Some of them were old enough to remember him in the vigour of life; others had known him in his more mature days; and others again, in his declining days. But throughout the whole of his life his sole object was the advancement and education of those committed to his charge. (Applause.) With a foresight which remarkably characterised him as an educator of youth, the late Mr. Bruce saw that something more was required for the rising youth of this district than a simple initiation into classic literature. He saw that to fit gentlemen for the manufactory or the counting-house, it was not enough for them to read Virgil, or scan any other Roman poet; but it was desirable that they should also acquire some of that knowledge which would be of material aid to them in their future occupations in life. In the North Mr. Bruce was one of the first to foresee the advantage of a judicious combination of these two branches of education. (Applause.) He trusted he might be excused pointing to those tables, filled by gentlemen at the head of many of the paths of life, as a proof how success had entirely crowned the efforts of Mr. Bruce. (Applause.) Mr. Bruce laid the foundation of a very excellent and prosperous concern in Percy Street; but a school was not a thing that could live long on the value of a good name. That required a constant stream of attention directed to it on the part of any one called to take its superintendence. (Hear, hear.) He (the Mayor) believed it was impossible to imagine that any one could have succeeded more worthily to the position of his late father than his friend, Dr. Bruce. (Cheers.) At the time when Dr. Bruce appeared likely to assume the reins of government in Percy Street Academy,

## Bruce's School

some considerable progress had been made in the cause of education generally. His late father made a first step in combining classical with the more useful of practical pursuits; and Dr. Bruce saw that the time was rapidly approaching when it would be necessary, on the part of all manufacturers, that they should have a more extended curriculum of study than that laid down by his late father; and it was to Dr. Bruce that they owed the introduction of a well-directed scientific system of education. (Applause.) They had a further proof of Dr. Bruce's fitness for the position he holds, when they reflected on the manner in which he passed his leisure moments. They were all acquainted with his remarkable work on the Roman Wall, and his later, but not less interesting work on the Tapestry of Bayeux. (Cheers.) His Worship concluded by giving the toast, which was drunk with three times three, and one cheer more.

Dr. BRUCE, who was enthusiastically cheered on rising, responded to the compliment as follows:—Mr. Mayor, School-mates, and Gentlemen,—This is an occasion of peculiar interest. The present gathering enables us to ascend the stream of time, to realise the joys of boyhood, and to review its warm-hearted friendships. We have long since forgotten the little troubles of our schoolboy life, or remember them only to wonder that they ever beclouded our brow. Once more surrounded by our former companions, we seem to be schoolboys again, and to drink in the joys of that sunny period all the more eagerly from our having become acquainted with the stern realities of life. (Applause.) Cheered by this momentary release from our ordinary anxieties, we shall return to the discharge of our usual avocations encouraged and strengthened. (Applause.) This is an occasion which must have an important reciprocal influence upon us all. We seldom drop a word which has not some effect



REV. JOHN COLLINGWOOD BRUCE,  
LL.D., D.C.L., F.S.A.



## The Jubilee Dinner

in moulding the character of the man to whom it is addressed. How vast must be the influence the teacher has upon his pupils! He has the advantage of age and authority—they are of an age to look for guidance, and their minds are in a state peculiarly susceptible of impressions. The teacher and the pupil are brought into close intercourse with each other for years. It is impossible to over-estimate the influence of a teacher in forming the habits and moulding the thoughts and feelings of his pupil; and this is education, rather than the cramming of the memory with a few facts. (Hear, hear.) I say this occasion will help forward this great cause. It will sustain the labourer in his wearisome, long-continued, and often thankless toils. Who can look upon this assembly, the fruits of but one school, and not be cheered? And yet the gentlemen here gathered are but the representatives of a host of others as high-principled, as intelligent, as influential, as useful. The husbandman is in spring cheered by the hopes of harvest. I am cheered by the sight of as goodly and golden a crop as ever waved in the autumnal breeze; and many a brother-schoolmaster who hears of our proceedings to-day will share my joy and take courage. I am sure that if fifty years ago my father could have anticipated such an assemblage, the labours and anxieties under which he was often almost sinking would have been comparatively light. But more than all this, gatherings such as the present have a tendency to elevate the schoolmaster in the social scale. My father had not cause to complain that an adequate meed of honour was not awarded him; still less have I. Still, it must be confessed that in general the schoolmaster holds a lower position in society than is right. It is for the good of mankind that the instructor of youth should both respect himself and be respected by others—that an office so useful should be accounted honourable. (Hear, hear.) Your presence here to-day, gentle-

## Bruce's School

men, and the kind expressions made use of by our excellent president, and responded to by you, proclaim to all the world that in this northern metropolis it is so regarded. (Applause.) You have referred, Mr. Mayor, to my father's merit as a teacher. It would be an unfilial act in me to attempt to depreciate them, or to say that your statement has not been too highly coloured. If he was not all that could be required as a teacher, he at least brought to the discharge of his duties great natural talents, enduring industry, and thorough conscientiousness. (Applause.) You have been pleased to refer to myself. My father was unwilling that I should devote myself to the scholastic profession. He, however, allowed me to pursue that course of study which would at once fit me for the discharge of the duties of the holy ministry or those of a teacher of youth. Seven years of my life were spent in the halls of that university which a year or two ago was pleased to bestow upon me the stamp of their approbation. (Applause.) In due time I made up my mind as to what was the path of duty, and joined my father in the management of the school. I have never for an instant repented of my choice, or doubted that I misinterpreted the leadings of Providence. Thus far Percy Street Academy has flourished. Providence has smiled upon my father's efforts and my own. Our pupils are scattered over the whole globe; and I trust and believe they have taken with them to the remotest parts, habits, principles, and truths acquired in the school, which may produce fruit throughout extensive spheres to unborn generations. (Applause.) It is not a usual thing, Mr. Mayor, for a school, unsupported by public funds, to subsist for half a century, especially in the same spot. At present it exhibits no signs of torpitude or decay. I feel myself strong for labour, and I feel that your good wishes for the prosperity of the school will meet with a response. Somewhat signally, this jubilee year has been



## The Jubilee Dinner

characterised by a small and very welcome addition to the school. Should that young pupil survive, and should I live to train him, I will strive to make him worthy of the name he bears, that of his grandfather; and it is within the bounds of possibility that the centenary of the Percy Street Academy may be celebrated with a John Bruce at its head. (Hear, hear.) Mr. Mayor, Messrs. Vice-Presidents, Gentlemen, the half-hour that on public occasions precedes the announcement that dinner is ready is for the most part a tedious one. This is not the case to-day. It is a season of recognition—a season of joyous remembrances. If we could have a game of leap-frog or prison-base, our happiness would be complete. It is one of the advantages of a public-school that, while it calls forth all the energies of a youth, it affords an opportunity for forming friendships which may last for life. The struggles of the classroom and the playground pave the way for intimacies of the most valuable kind. At all times it is a pleasure to hear of the welfare of a schoolfellow, and sometimes it is our great happiness to promote it. It is in this spirit, Mr. Mayor, that I would give a toast, "The Alumni of the Percy Street Academy—may health and long life be theirs, and may all prosperity attend them." Where are they? I would reply, Where are they not? They throng the streets of our town, and they fill our highest offices. When had we a worthier or a more right worshipful Mayor? What would the commerce of the Quayside be without a Robert Plummer? The neighbouring borough is under great obligations to my friend Mr. Kell. My own playmate, Mr. Woodman, could ill be spared from the Northern Division of Northumberland. Where are they not? Sink a pit through the centre of the earth to the antipodes, and there you find them, blessing their neighbourhood, I trust, by their knowledge, their uprightness, their religious walk. In India they are

## Bruce's School

conducting our commerce and laying our railways. In China you will find them; in South America, in the West Indies, in the United States, in Canada they abound. Africa was a quarter of the earth in which my father took peculiar interest, and Africa has not been unblessed by his pupils. The Egyptian railway may almost be said to be a Percy Street scheme. A pupil of my father's planned it, and two of my pupils were selected by him (Mr. Stephenson) to assist in the formation of it. The interior of Africa has been explored by a Percy Street man—Major Laing, once an usher in the school, was the first European man to reach Timbuctoo. The most influential man in Cape Colony, Mr. Fairbairn, was for some years Latin master in this school. My brother Edward, being compelled on account of his health to flee this country, is now, under the patronage of Government, conducting a school at Fort Beaufort, near Grahams Town, close upon the borders of Kaffirland. In all walks of life you will meet with them. They sit upon the bench. Several of us remember William Darnell Davis, Chief Justice of Grenada. They occupy the pulpit. Not to refer to distant places, who can estimate to Newcastle the labours of the Rev. Richard Clayton, who for seven or eight years was an inmate of the Percy Street Academy? The Army and Navy, as already observed, have been recruited from our ranks. But, Mr. Mayor, I must check myself. Were I to enumerate all the worthy alumni of the Percy Street Academy, I should weary you. There is one name, however, to which prominence must be given. It is the high honour of the school, whose jubilee we celebrate, that it produced a Robert Stephenson. (Loud cheers.) Had it done nothing more in the course of fifty years, it would have established a claim upon the gratitude of the world. Mr. Mayor, I will say nothing to you of the achievements of that great man. Many of us here account it an honour to have been

## The Jubilee Dinner

his schoolfellows; some few have competed with him in the race of scholarship; all of us unite in doing him honour. (Applause.) If there is one thing which more than another distinguishes that great man, it is his humility. Whilst the world rings with his fame he is unconscious of having done more than his neighbours. Had he been present, as he at one time hoped to be, he would have given you proof of my assertion; as he is not, I will venture to read to you a passage from a letter of his, which I received some time ago:—"Your letter possessed an additional interest beyond a mere complimentary epistle; it revived the recollection of our earlier days; and, above all, it reminded me of your worthy and esteemed parent, to whom I owe so much. Indeed, it is to his tuition and methods of modelling the mind that I attribute much of my success as an engineer. It was from him I derived my taste for mathematical pursuits, and the faculty I possess of applying this kind of knowledge to practical purposes and modifying it to circumstances." I am sorry that Mr. Stephenson's absence from our meeting to-day is occasioned by the state of his health. Need we wonder that the bodily frame of a man to whose genius we are indebted more than that of any other individual's for the development of that great marvel of modern times, the railway system, should have suffered by his anxieties and gigantic mental efforts? In a letter which one of our vice-chairmen, Mr. Kell, received from our distinguished schoolfellow last week, he says:—"It would have afforded me very sincere pleasure if I could have joined the jubilee dinner to my much esteemed friend Dr. Bruce, but I am leaving England next Friday or Saturday to spend the winter in a more sunny clime. I should like, however, my name to be amongst the stewards, as I should regret that the event should pass away without my name being associated with it." (Applause.) Need I add anything, Mr. Mayor, to induce this

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company, in toasting "The Alumni of the Percy Street Academy," to express their hearty wishes for the improved health and long life of Mr. Robert Stephenson? (Loud applause.)

Mr. HUGH SHIELD responded to the toast. He feared that he might incur the ridicule of an anti-climax in rising to answer the toast of Mr. Robert Stephenson. The only qualification he had for the task was the circumstance that for some years he sat on the next seat to him in Mr. Bruce's Academy—so that he might have caught a little reflection of his distinguished character. (Applause.) Though he (Mr. Shield) could not pretend to the least distinction, either in letters, arts, or science, yet he yielded to none of his fellow-pupils in the most deep and sincere gratitude for the benefit he had derived from that establishment. (Applause.) From what he remembered of the system of education there practised, it carried both classics and mathematics as far as the limited time would allow the pupils to carry on either branch of study. There was enough taught to give a most useful stock of knowledge, and also to excite in the breasts of the pupils a zeal for acquiring a further supply, which to many of them was not only a matter of utility, but was also a refining and ennobling amusement, and an excellent substitute for those enjoyments which we were too apt to fall back upon for want of something better. (Applause.) The advantages of an institution like the Percy Street Academy in a district like this could hardly be exaggerated. The character of a town very much depended on its educational establishments being good or bad. (Cheers.) Even in his time the administration of this school was excellent. The eye of the teacher was on every boy's conduct, and examining every boy's advancement or decline. A spirit of emulation was excited, which operated even when the eye of the master was withdrawn from their proceedings. It was peculiarly suitable that on an

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occasion like this they should take an opportunity of expressing their gratitude; for the opposite feeling had too often marked their conduct. Had not the schoolmaster great difficulty in driving knowledge into their minds? (Hear, hear.) School-boys had no idea what troublesome animals they were. (A laugh.) How valuable the instruction they received! What a necessary discipline! And yet they received it with anything but gratitude at the time. They had almost the same difficulty in feeling gratitude to the schoolmaster as they had to the medical man when he administered a disagreeable potion. (Laughter.) They must now make amends by doing what they could to aid the prosperity of the school. (Cheers.)

Mr. ROBERT PLUMMER proposed the health of the Rev. Dr. Bruce. (Applause.) He said that though on most points he had been forestalled, he thought no reference had been made to the peculiar position of the times when the school was founded. The population was then largely extending itself, and the old foundations were nowise competent to meet the wants of the district. The Grammar School was not sufficient; neither the Government nor the public interfered, and it was left to private individuals to supply to the nation that great want that then existed. Need he say how largely the growing population of this town were indebted to Mr. Bruce for the ground he took up? He (Mr. Plummer) saw around him many who were his schoolfellows, and he had a most grateful recollection of the benefits he received when he was a scholar in that Academy. He was a boarder many years, and he could remember how, both in classics and mathematics, and in moral and religious instruction, he was benefited by the tuition he there received. (Applause.) He now came to the period when his friend, Dr. Bruce, entered on the scene, and he might at once address himself to that period when he was the Doctor's

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schoolfellow. He had conducted himself as a scholar in a way which had raised him to become the master of the school. He (Mr. Plummer) did not think a higher tribute could be paid to him than was shown in the fact that a large class of his fellow-pupils placed under his care those young persons to them most dear. (Applause.) But there was another feature the Mayor had alluded to in Dr. Bruce's character which he must glance at, and that was the renown he had conferred on the school over which he had presided, and on the town of Newcastle, by the great attention he had paid to the study of antiquities. (Applause.) He (Mr. Plummer) confessed that, in early life, he had very little taste for antiquities, but he found that the more antiquated he grew himself—(laughter)—the more respect he had for antiquities. And though still by no means an antiquarian, he could form some slight estimate of Dr. Bruce's labours in that capacity. He felt, in common with others, great obligations to Dr. Bruce for the manner in which he had illustrated the antiquities of this district. (Applause.) Were it necessary he might go into the more tender relations of life, and refer to Dr. Bruce's conduct as a man, a husband, and a father; but the younger members of the school would have a more lively sense than those of older standing of the way in which his friend acquitted himself in these respects. (Hear, hear.) He could, however, bear witness to the high regard in which he is held by his fellow-townsmen. (Loud applause.)

Dr. BRUCE, in responding to the toast, said he distinctly remembered Mr. Plummer and his contemporaries, Mr. Matthew and Mr. Richard Clayton, as schoolfellows. For years they were thus associated. It was pleasing to have those times brought back and to live their youth anew. (Applause.) The scene before him impressed him with something approaching to awe. He felt more impressively the responsibility of his

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position. Teachers, to a certain extent, had the moulding of the minds that had to be the men of future generations. (Hear, hear.) Notwithstanding these feelings of solemnity, he would take encouragement and go on. (Cheers.) He had been tempted of late to dive into studies of bygone times. He had been led into this in his capacity of teacher. If a schoolmaster made himself a mere mill-horse—if he contented himself with the mere daily routine of duties—he would become a lifeless, inanimate, and comparatively useless teacher. (Hear, hear.) Schoolmasters must not let their minds stagnate. If they lost freshness they lost vigour. During fifteen years he never read a book that was not to be directly useful in school. Saturday and Sunday, historical, scientific, or religious knowledge were sought after with this view. His own eyes and brain were little less than a filter. He was acting the part of a hen preparing food for her chickens—food prepared for their somewhat tender apprehensions and tastes. Thus his private studies and school teachings had been identical. There were two ways of studying history: one was to take a considerable portion to get at facts, and another was to take a smaller portion and go into it thoroughly. In studying Saxon history he had found it both useful and delightful to dive into Saxon architecture. He was then led into Norman times and its architecture, and a visit to Durham was the consequence. In studying Roman history he had not to go far for materials, our own district possessing the most magnificent Roman remains, he might say, in Europe. (Applause.) In this way he had been led into these matters. (Hear, hear.) He concluded by thanking them most heartily for drinking his health.

Mr. KELL rose to propose the health of "The Mayor," but before doing so he wished to make a single reference to Percy Street Academy, of which forty-four years since he was a

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scholar. He still saw around him some of his old schoolfellows, but the hand of time had been very heavy. Amongst others he saw his friends Mr. Dean and Mr. Plummer, men who testified by the position they had attained and maintained in society, the value of the instruction they had received at the Percy Street Academy. (Cheers.) But not only had the hand of time been heavy upon them, but the hand of death also. Allusion had been made to the want of representatives of the Army and Navy. He remembered many schoolfellows who afterwards entered one or the other service; one in particular, who had been referred to by Mr. Hawks. He (Mr. Kell) had a vivid remembrance of William Thain. They sat side by side for some years, and while he (Mr. Kell) remained at home, his friend entered the Army to maintain the honour of his country's arms. He received from William Thain the first account he could understand of the Battle of Waterloo. He was an adjutant to the Iron Duke's own regiment, the 33rd, and he only escaped the perils of that day to leave his bones on the plains of Afghanistan. (Hear, hear.) He now came to propose the health of the Mayor, who so ably presided at their meeting. (Loud cheers.) His Worship had met his old schoolfellows with a warmth of spirit which all were glad to reciprocate. The Mayor was himself a very striking proof of the value of such instruction as was imparted at the Percy Street Academy, for his Worship was no less eminent for his talent as a scientific manufacturer than for his intelligence and honour as a merchant. (Loud cheers.) Well would it be for the town if it were always presided over by a gentleman of his character and attainments. (Cheers.) Repeatedly—he might say on all occasions, when his Worship had had the opportunity of addressing his fellow-townsmen—he had expressed the anxiety he felt to promote the moral and intellectual improvement of the working classes;



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and the educational establishment at Washington was a proof that he meant what he said. (Applause.) It would be uncourteous were he not to allude to Mrs. Mayoress, who had gained the praise of all persons by the way in which she had promoted the amenities of the office; but in one respect she had attracted the attention of the whole country—he meant the admirable manner in which she originated and directed the subscription of the ladies of this town and neighbourhood on behalf of our suffering troops in the Crimea. (Loud cheers.)

The MAYOR, in returning thanks, said he was willing to admit that if he had discharged the duties of the chair to their satisfaction much of the credit was due to the establishment where he had received his education—(hear, hear)—and yet he felt that a great deal was also due to their own kind indulgence. He also thanked them on behalf of Mrs. Mayoress, who, he could assure them, felt as lively a responsibility as himself in regard to the office. (Applause.)

Mr. JOHN TAYLOR, A.M., proposed the health of Mrs. Bruce, senior. He said:—We have heard much of the importance and the difficulty of the scholastic profession. How, it may be asked, is the instructor of youth, especially one at the head of a great establishment, enabled to discharge his office? A sense of duty, love of labour, and the progress made by his pupils have considerable weight. But it adds greatly to such motives when the master has a wife worthy of him. (Hear, hear.) Even with those who most earnestly and most successfully have occupied themselves with instruction, the work is sometimes uphill, and little progress is visible. A conscientious and high-minded man is apt to feel discouraged. But it is soothing when, after the little rubs and annoyances to be occasionally looked for, he can take refuge in his parlour, and, by the interesting converse of his fair partner, be strengthened for

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the work of the ensuing day. (Applause.) By the mingled delicacy and discernment which belongs to a woman of superior mind, he is put in the way of proceeding with his pupils still more effectually than, if left to himself, could be expected. Providence blesses with a family such a couple as we have supposed. They are trained in the way of truth and righteousness. There is increased responsibility; boarders are kept. To parents it is an unspeakable satisfaction that their children are in a house where, being under fatherly superintendence, there are called forth the united respect and confidence felt naturally towards a mother. More still: arrangements in the family are so well made that there is time for spending some hours daily in the school. It is obvious that, unless the foundation has been well laid, it is difficult for the most careful teachers to do much good. But by such a woman the foundation was effectually laid. She wrought with easy power. Much was done; but there was no vehemence—no apparent effort. Her pupils being gathered around, it was interesting to see her exercise firm but gentle sway—until the principles of knowledge, and what is more valuable than all which is earthly—awaken the slumbering powers, and excite the desire of whatever is pure and elevated. (Applause.) Such a picture as might be formed by fancy it would be pleasing to contemplate; a judicious and enlightened woman, well-bred and kind-hearted, upright and amiable, labouring with tender assiduity and great success in her sacred vocation. But it is more pleasing that, for the portraiture of a Christian gentlewoman, we are not called to draw on fancy. The bright reality it has been our privilege to know. Some as pupils, all of us as friends and admirers, have had intercourse with Mrs. Bruce, senior. (Applause.) She has had her reward. Affliction has been softened to her. She can recall without overwhelming distress the memory of

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the departed. She knows that those are not lost who are gone before. The path of the just is as the shining light. We are not to limit the comparison. We ought to consider the progress from the dawn, not merely to the meridian, but to sunset. Every part of the sun's course is beautiful or glorious. So it may be in human life. So it is with our venerable friend. May her evenings continue calm and serene—happy herself, and adding much to the happiness of those who stately or occasionally are beside her. (Cheers.)

Dr. BRUCE, in responding to the toast, said:—Mr. Mayor, the deep feeling with which you have given expression to your good wishes for my honoured mother has produced its necessary effect upon my mind. Gentlemen, you have precluded me from saying much in reply. To Mr. Taylor I am much indebted. I have long known the warmth of his heart and the high chivalry of his feelings. I will endeavour, though I fear unsuccessfully, to report to my mother his eloquent address. The school has throughout the whole of its existence been largely indebted to her. For some years she took an active part in instructing the younger pupils of the academy, as well as in attending to the comforts of the resident pupils. The cheerfulness of her disposition enabled her to sustain my father when he needed a comforter. Her real kindness of heart spread a charm over the whole household. Since she has retired from the active duties of life, her sympathies are with the school as much as ever, and her counsels have been of the utmost importance to my wife and myself. Mr. Mayor, there is one feature in my mother's character to which I cannot help alluding—it is her unaffected piety. In all her dealings with the young, she endeavoured not only to fit them for usefulness in this world, but to point them to the skies; and her daily prayer for all of us is that we may not only be happy but good—that we may so

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pass through this world as not to lose that which is everlasting. (Applause.)

Dr. HUMBLE, in proposing "The Assistants of Percy Street Academy, past and present," said he saw around him many of the contemporaries of his late father. He also saw many of those with whom he (Dr. Humble) had entered into active life. Following down the stream, he saw others who had succeeded the latter, and filled their vacant places. Both old and young owed a deep and never-to-be-forgotten debt of gratitude to Dr. Bruce and his late father. But there were others who ought not to be forgotten—many of whom had borne with all their boyish follies and ingratitude, and assisted them in climbing the rugged steep of Parnassus. (Cheers.) It was, perhaps, invidious to make a selection, but a deep feeling of affection and long intercourse justified him in selecting one who for many years introduced many of the gentlemen now present to the classic literature of Greece and Rome. (Hear, hear.) They must all remember the amiable disposition, kindly feeling, and, above all, the deep learning of Mr. John Taylor, associated as they were with capabilities of teaching of a high order. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. TAYLOR briefly responded. He said he knew Mr. Isaac Bell in his earlier boyhood, and he looked to him as a model of what a schoolboy should be. (Hear, hear.) Of the present staff of assistants it might not be proper to speak; but with such a head as they had over them, there was no doubt of their doing well. Some of them might live to see the centenary of the institution; and on that occasion perhaps the infant Bruce would be found at the right hand of the chair. (Laughter and applause.)

Mr. GARVEN (who was loudly and repeatedly called for) also responded. He said he had been for twenty years connected

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with that institution, and during the time he had experienced great kindness from Dr. Bruce and his family, besides repeated tokens of good-will both from the parents and pupils. (Applause.) He believed his humble labours had been estimated far beyond their value. One in his position was expected to understand the art rather than the principle—to be expert in the methods of teaching rather than profound in its theory. (Applause.) In working out the details of any system, there was necessarily a great amount of drudgery, which required that the mind of the mathematical and classical teacher should be well balanced, in order to withstand the exhausting effects of his mental labours. The cultivation of the intellectual faculties, combined with moral improvement, and the nurture of those principles which constitute the basis of a valuable character, was a slow process. It must go on from day to day—there must be line upon line and precept upon precept, and the daily effect was scarcely perceptible, though the experienced teacher knew the certainty of the result. He never knew any one proof against well-directed efforts. (Hear, hear.) He believed everything at the Percy Street School was conducted in a healthy and vigorous spirit. They found it requisite to stimulate the mental activity; and the necessary routine was not carried on so as to allow the mind to stagnate, and its faculties to languish. There was not a teacher connected with the school who was not desirous continually to inspire the excelsior spirit. (Applause.) It afforded him sincere gratification to see so many here with whose features he was familiar. Some had a little perplexed and bewildered him in the recognition, but others he recognised at once. He had known them as light-hearted and sometimes uproarious boys. (Laughter.) Some were men of professional eminence, and occupied stations in society of great influence. He could not express the plea-

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sure he felt in seeing their faces on this joyous occasion. He could look back to many happy hours he had spent in assisting them to climb the steep side of that hill which one of our own writers had described as laborious indeed in its first ascent, but less so afterwards; and so smooth, so green, and so full of goodly prospect and melodious sound, that even the harp of Orpheus was not more charming. (Applause.) At the close of Mr. Garven's address, the younger portion of the company rose spontaneously, and gave three hearty cheers.

Mr. JOHN BURN, being called on for a song, gave a very humorous one, relating to the war, which, from the chorus, might be termed "The Warlike A, B, C." The line, "N stands for Napier, who slogged Jimmy Graham," was received with especial laughter.

Mr. RICHARDSON proposed the health of "John Clayton, Esq., and the other Visitors." (Loud cheers.)

Mr. CLAYTON, in responding, said he was sorry he was not an alumnus of Percy Street Academy. He was present to-day in the character of a friend of Dr. Bruce, and he was proud of the friendship of a man of so much literary eminence and private worth. (Applause.) Dr. Bruce had done much to illustrate the history of the past; and oh that the warriors and statesmen of the present day would learn to benefit by the lesson it affords! Dr. Bruce has inscribed his name in the annals of the literature of his country in characters which would endure as long as the language itself. (Applause.) Independent of the advantage that must accrue to a school from the high position which the master took in the literature of the country, it must be an advantage to the pupils, in studying the history of the world and acquiring the language of the Romans, practically to know that their power, that their presence in this country, was not a

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myth, but a substantial reality. (Applause.) At the same time that Dr. Bruce had thus shed a lustre on the town to which he belonged, he had ably and successfully conducted the seminary established by his father. (Applause.) Though it had not been his own good fortune to drink at the fountain of learning and of science which had flowed in Percy Street for the last half-century, it was not without benefit to him that his brother and partner had enjoyed that advantage, an advantage for which he was deeply grateful. He hoped, with Mr. Taylor, that the Percy Street Academy would continue from age to age, and he was glad to find that the prospects of succession had lately become so good. (Laughter.) Mr. Clayton concluded by proposing the health of "The Rising Generation." (Applause.)

Mr. J. L. FOSTER responded to the toast.

Dr. PEARSE proposed the next toast, "Our Absent School-fellows," and, with great eloquence, gave a cursory view of the different "spans of life" on which they had entered. After the toast had been duly received,

His Honour STEUART DAVIS rose, and was warmly greeted. He said he was one of those pupils who had lived far away in the tropics, but a tropical sun had warmed their feelings of affection for the place where they had received their early education. (Applause.) The feelings which had been expressed to-day would vibrate to distant shores, and their absent friends would be one in heart with them in reference to this jubilee. (Applause.) When he had a son old enough for school he had sent him to Dr. Bruce. The most useful part of the education he had received was from Mr. John Bruce. He hoped Dr. Bruce would continue his endeavours, and that his assistants would emulate him in promoting a useful and moral training. (Applause.)

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Mr. NICHOL being called upon, also responded on behalf of his brother, holding a high position in India.

Mr. JOHN FENWICK then proposed "Mrs. J. C. Bruce and Family." (Loud cheers.) He was intimately acquainted with the way in which Mrs. Bruce conducted the establishment over which her husband presided, and it was utterly impossible to find a lady better fitted for her position. (Applause.) With respect to her family, her eldest son he had had the pleasure of having as a pupil in his own office, and he bade fair, in another line, to emulate the position which his father and grandfather had attained. Miss Bruce was a most estimable young lady, and her charms were developing more and more. He could not speak of the younger Mr. John Collingwood Bruce—(laughter)—but he hoped they would live to see the day when his friend Dr. Bruce would have "his quiver full" of such. (Cheers and laughter.)

Mr. GAINSFORD BRUCE, rising amidst loud cheers to acknowledge the toast, responded in the following terms:—Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen,—I rise to thank you for drinking my mother's health. This, indeed, is an occasion she will long remember. Your kind expressions will not soon be forgotten by her. The scholars of Percy Street Academy hold a high place in her esteem, and she sets no ordinary value upon your regard. Many of you are not too old to have been at the school since my mother has been connected with it. In you she feels a great interest, and it must be very pleasing to her to know that you have so warm a recollection of your schoolboy days. A good wish is a cheering thing, and the graceful compliment you have paid my mother, by whomsoever offered, could not but have been pleasing to her; but, coming from you, it is no ordinary compliment—it is an honour which the old scholars of Percy Street Academy alone could bestow. (Applause.) It derives



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its force—I know it does—from the memory of days you look back upon with pleasure. (Hear, hear.) The event of to-day will touch a long chain of associations in my mother's mind; and, with many a happy thought of the past, she will mingle earnest wishes for the future welfare of every one of you. (Applause.) I have thanked you in her name; let me also thank you in my own. She thanks you, and I thank you. Knowing how great a gratification this must be to my mother, I cannot but participate in her pleasure. I do feel elated at the honour paid to her in whose feelings it is my pride to share, whose happiness must ever be my happiness. I thank you with all the force of one who hopes never to forget that the honour of children is their parents'. (Applause.) Along with my mother's health you have associated my sister's, my brother's, and my own. For all, I thank you. I am only afraid my brother is hardly able to appreciate the compliment. (Laughter.) It will, however, be one of the first things he will be told of as soon as he is able to understand, and his earliest recollections will be associated with this jubilee. He will be told of the honour paid to him for his father's sake and his grandfather's, and from his very childhood it will be a motive to him to act worthily of the honoured name he bears. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. HUGH SHIELD proposed "Prosperity to the Literary and Scientific Institutions of the Town."

Mr. JOSEPH WATSON, one of the Secretaries of the Literary and Philosophical Society, being called upon by the Mayor, responded, and took that opportunity of soliciting subscriptions to the "Stephenson Fund." A Percy Street scholar had offered £3,100 to discharge one-half of the debt which weighed down the society of which he (Mr. Watson) was secretary, on condition that the whole burden was thrown off, and the annual subscription was reduced one-half. Let the schoolfellows of

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Mr. Stephenson come prominently forward to raise the remaining moiety, and enable the company who should celebrate the centenary of the school to boast that the Percy Street scholars had given new life and vigour to the foremost literary institution of the town. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. CLAYTON proposed "The Scientific Manufacturers of the Town." (Cheers.) He said the manufactories of this district were one of its proudest distinctions. If a locomotive engine was wanted to go from Vienna to Berlin, they sent to this town for it; if they wanted machinery to operate on the ports of Sebastopol and Balaklava, they sent to the Elswick Engine Works; and if they wanted the telegraph to work in difficult circumstances and strong seas, they sent to Mr. Newall. (Applause.) He was happy to see at the head of the table a gentleman who presided with great talent over one of the greatest manufacturing firms of the district, and he begged to give the toast, coupled with the health of their worthy president, The Mayor. (Loud cheers.)

His WORSHIP, in acknowledging the toast, said the first step to success was to have a due respect and veneration for that line of action they might be called upon to operate in; and he must confess that he had a very exalted idea of the position held by manufacturers in the social scale, because it was allowed to the manufacturer the task of moulding the various raw materials that Providence had diffused so abundantly in Nature to the various uses of mankind. (Applause.) As the Town Clerk had told them, if machinery was wanted, this was the first place in the kingdom which was resorted to for it; and if, on the other hand, they wanted the earliest intelligence, they must apply to a gentleman, a near relative of his own. (Applause.) He was glad of the opportunity of stating that Mr. Newall had just succeeded in laying the telegraph down

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between this country and the Crimea with such success that the reporting engineer of the Government, entertaining a confident opinion of Mr. Newall's skill, and the means he had brought to bear, had not hesitated to communicate to the Government at home that there was no nation, however distant, with whom we might not soon be placed in still more intimate relation, by having in connection with it the electric telegraph. (Cheers.) It must be gratifying to Dr. Bruce that so many of his old scholars occupied so distinguished a position among the manufacturing body. (Applause.)

Mr. R. CAIL proposed the health of "The Stewards" who had undertaken to act on this occasion, and who, it was sufficient to say, had fulfilled their duties in a manner to give satisfaction to them all. (Applause.)

Mr. WOODMAN, of Morpeth, returned thanks. He said the energetic Secretary had left the Stewards little to do, but that little had been a labour of love. It was impossible they could do too much to express their veneration for one now no more, and their respect for one still happily amongst them. (Applause.) It was their earnest wish that he might long be spared to confer benefits on others, and be an ornament to the literature of the country. (Applause.)

Mr. G. W. HODGE proposed "The Secretary and Committee of Management." (Applause.) He reminded the Mayor that he (Mr. Hodge) was one of his schoolfellows at Percy Street Academy, and passed a high eulogium on the system of instruction there pursued.

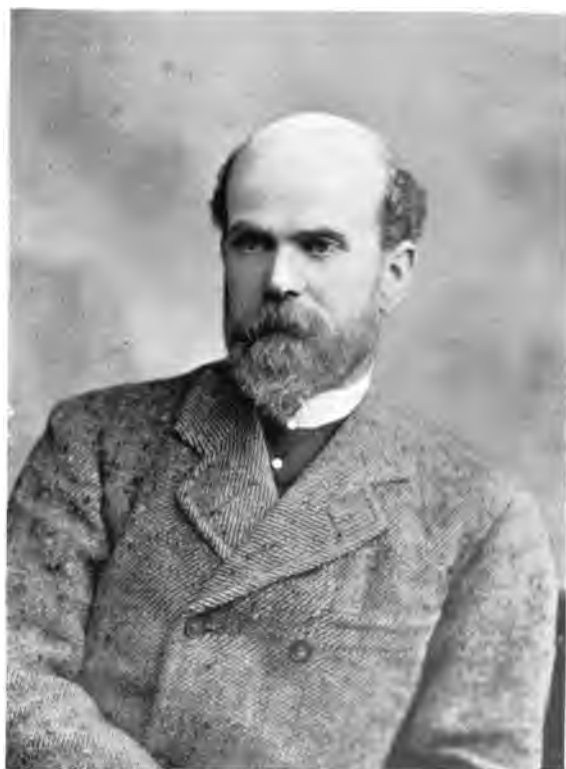
Mr. DAGGETT responded to the toast.

The MAYOR, in giving the concluding toast, "To the Next Merry Meeting," said they had now, as he might say, celebrated what the Germans called "the silver wedding." He hoped they might many of them live to celebrate with the worthy

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Doctor his "golden wedding" also, although it might be too much to expect that Mrs. Bruce should commemorate the one as she had been pleased to do the other. (Great laughter.) He was sure, however, that Dr. Bruce would be glad to meet them that day twenty-five years. The young gentleman would then be able to meet them also, and give them an account of all the good wishes which had been expressed on his behalf. (Loud cheers.)

The company now separated.



EDWARD T. NISBET.



## THE ANNUAL DINNERS.

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### **FIRST ANNUAL DINNER, 5th JULY, 1895.**

The First Dinner of the Old Boys of Percy Street Academy, since the Jubilee Dinner of 1855, was held in the year 1895, at the Douglas Hotel, with no intention of their becoming annual affairs, but with the sole object of doing honour to an Old Boy of the Robertson era, on his appointment to the Recordership of his native town. And the inspiration was a happy one, for Mr. W. S. Robson, K.C., is a general favourite in the North, and many have been the regrets expressed that his many legal and political engagements would appear to have prevented his again visiting what has now become the Annual Meeting of the Old Boys. Unfortunately, the compiler of these records has very scant material to work upon so far as the early Dinners are concerned, the Hon. Secretary having no memoranda of what took place, and the writer not being present, having had no knowledge of the affair until it was too late. He has, however, tried to make amends by being at all the subsequent gatherings. It is generally understood that Mr. Edward Clark and Mr.

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E. T. Nisbet were the most forward of those associated with promoting the enjoyable evening, which has inspired others to imitate their good example. About two dozen of the Old Boys met for the first time for many years, and heartily gave vent to the feelings revived by the speeches and songs rendered on the occasion.

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### SECOND ANNUAL DINNER, 18th MARCH, 1898.

The Second Annual Dinner (at the Douglas Hotel, on 18th March 1898<sup>1</sup>) was given in honour of Sir George Hare Philipson, an Old Boy under Dr. Bruce in 1844 and following years. Professor William C. Arnison, M.D., D.C.L., was in the chair. After the loyal toasts had been duly honoured, the Chairman proposed "Our Guest." No one could have been chosen better fitted to fulfil the pleasing duty, from his full knowledge of Sir George's private life and many public services rendered gratuitously, which latter, when considered alongside his numerous professional engagements, is a sacrifice not always sufficiently appreciated. Besides, who else so able to judge of their value as his old schoolfellow while travelling along the same professional path?

Sir GEORGE H. PHILIPSON replied, and was visibly touched by the complimentary remarks of the Chair-

<sup>1</sup> There was no Annual Dinner in the years 1896 and 1897.





PROFESSOR SIR GEORGE HARE PHILIPSON,  
M.A., M.D., D.C.L., LL.D., F.R.C.P.



## Second Annual Dinner

man, but gradually warming to his work and having his hearers on good terms with themselves, he did not allow the serious tone to run on too long; and by the time he related his account of the "floating rib," we were quite ready to hear Mr. EDWARD CLARK on his memory of the old school, which, unfortunately, did not carry us far enough back, his date, 1864, being several years after the school had passed entirely into the hands of Mr. Robertson. After Mr. Clark's speech no provision had been made for an extended programme, and Mr. Nisbet endeavoured by his persuasive powers to get speakers, but found it very difficult indeed to get any one to "chatter" impromptu. Happily, the thirty-seven Old Boys were soon relieved of any doubt of the proceedings coming to an end, as a youthful old gentleman sprang up and said, "If none of you fellows will make a speech, I'll sing you a song," and before any one could realise what had happened, our "Vital Spark," Mr. William J. Scott<sup>1</sup> of Rowley (an 1844 Boy), was driving ahead with the "Gay Cavalier," a song much in vogue in the late 'forties. This set the ball rolling, and a most agreeable evening was spent. Before separating, Mr. Archibald Reed, under the persuasive powers of Mr. Nisbet, proposed "Our Next Merry Meeting."

<sup>1</sup> "Time has touched me gently in his race,  
And left no odious furrows in my face."

—CRABBE.

# Bruce's School

## THIRD ANNUAL DINNER, 19th JANUARY, 1899.

The Third Annual Dinner was held in the County Hotel, on the 19th January 1899. Forty-five Old Boys sat under the chairmanship of Mr. John Bell Simpson, J.P., F.G.S., M.I.C.E., and a better man at the head of a festive board has yet to be found. His quiet, unobtrusive manner is a charm in itself, but doubly so when accompanied, as it generally is on such occasions, with frequent sparks of wit and flashes of merriment, never losing what is going on all along the board—always in touch, and with no loss of time. On this occasion the Committee decided not to honour any particular Old Boy as guest, as to continue that practice would most certainly place them on the “horns of a dilemma” before long; so an equivalent compliment was intended to be conveyed to the Old Boy whoever in future might be invited to act as chairman.

Mr. Wm. J. Scott, after the usual loyal toasts, proposed “The Memory of the Old School,” and made many very interesting remarks about the school and the town in the 'forties, which were well received and very instructive, more particularly to those who were his juniors by ten or fifteen years; but the “Vital Spark” was not long suppressed by the more sober



WILLIAM J. SCOTT.



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vein of antiquity. He lashed out on the schoolboy days of the 'forties, which after all very much resembled those of the 'fifties in apple-stealing, playing "Jack-man" on the way home, etc. Mr. Scott's remarks are always so refreshing, it is unfortunate we now hear less of him owing to others requiring a "turn," as is understood in the programmes of the variety stage of to-day.

Holiday Song was now rendered, as it has been at all the dinners, with real enthusiasm.

Professor W. C. ARNISON proposed "The Chairman and Vice-Chairman," which were suitably responded to, and "Our Next Merry Meeting" brought a most pleasant evening to a close, the general feeling being that the success of future meetings was assured.

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### FOURTH ANNUAL DINNER, 12th JANUARY, 1900.

The Fourth Annual Dinner was held at the County Hotel, Newcastle, on 12th January 1900, when forty-five Old Boys sat under the chairmanship of Mr. John David Scott. With the loyal toasts over, Mr. JOHN B. SIMPSON, gave "The Memory of the Old School," and was not long in tickling his hearers with some very choice remembrances of old times. He pictured

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the entrance from St. Thomas' Street and through several of the rooms, describing as he went along many enjoyable recollections of the years 1851, 1852, and 1853. Mr. Simpson has a fund of humour in treating a subject of this kind. His references to the Doctor's study, which he mentioned as the "torture chamber," evidently was not misunderstood, and his description of the boarders' doings on the last night of the "half" was also very funny, and showed great consideration for the new boys expected to join the following term. With respect to the "Bayeux Tapestry," Dr. Bruce gave several lectures in the "Lit. and Phil." on this subject, and Mr. Simpson said he had to use a pointer for the Doctor, as he read his lecture, to draw attention to the various subjects on the elaborate drawings which illustrated it. These drawings are now in the Black Gate Museum, and were drawn and enlarged by Mr. Simpson and other boys at school, from a small representation of the tapestry. John Moffat, a son of the African missionary, was the chief draughtsman, and the others simply filled in the details and coloured them.

We give a description of this tapestry from the *Sunday Chronicle*:—

### THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY.

About eight hundred years ago a strip of strong white linen, more than two hundred feet long and about twenty inches wide, was worked in coloured crewels with a series of figures repre-





JOHN BELL SIMPSON,  
J.P., F.G.S., M.I.C.E.



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senting the invasion of England by William of Normandy, as well as with some of the incidents that preceded that portentous event and those that immediately followed it.

There are (says a writer in *Chambers's Journal*) more than six hundred and twenty men worked upon the long strip of linen; more than two hundred horses and five hundred other animals; no fewer than thirty-seven buildings and forty-one sea-going vessels of various sorts; and nearly fifty trees, some of which are interlaced in groups. The faces of the men are about the size of a penny or of a florin, and the rest of their figures are in proportion to this scale. The large number of miscellaneous animals delineated arises from the use of them to ornament two borders that extend along the whole length of the top and base of the work.

For the most part the human figures are arranged in small groups, depicting seventy-two scenes divided from each other by conventional trees; and, as though there should be no uncertainty as to the intention of the representations or tableaux, they are elucidated with short inscriptions setting forth their exact meaning.

This is the famous piece of needlework so well known as the Bayeux Tapestry. In reality it is not tapestry at all, as we understand the term; but it is crewel-work of the kind that has been recently so much in vogue among ourselves. It consists in some parts, such as the faces and hands, of outlines sewn neatly over with coloured crewels, leaving the background of linen in view; and in others, such as the garments, sails, and animals, of these outlines filled up completely with the crewels. It has been handed down as the work of Matilda, the wife of William the Conqueror. English and French antiquaries and critics have brought forward other claims, and even urged those of two other Matildas; but its interest consists not so much in

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its authorship, though that is very appealing, as in the "fierce light" it throws upon the transactions of the stirring times it depicts.

This long strip of white linen, now embrowned and somewhat faded, and also somewhat tattered towards the end of its length, where the battlefield is shown, is at the present day deposited in the town's library or museum at Bayeux. For centuries it was kept in the cathedral, and it is mentioned in a catalogue of the property belonging to the church in 1476. There is no word in this document as to its being the work of the wife of the Conqueror, though there are two entries in it that describe two mantles that Duke William and his wife wore at their marriage and which then belonged to the church. Napoleon recognised its historical value, and he had it conveyed to Paris when contemplating his invasion of England, and caused it to be publicly exhibited for some time; and considerable capital is said to have been made out of the singular coincidence in connection with the comet then visible that a similar "stella" was represented in the tapestry as having preceded or heralded William's successful undertaking. After its return to Bayeux, "la toilette du Duc Guillaume," as it was called, was placed in the town library, where it is now exhibited, as stated, carefully preserved under glass.

The work gives us a truly graphic account of the details of the Conquest. It begins with a representation of King Edward the Confessor seated on his throne conversing with two persons who are standing by his side, one of whom is supposed to be Harold. According to our own impressions, we may decide that the King is either instructing him to go to Normandy, or forbidding him to do so. In the next compartment Harold is shown, with several companions, riding with a hawk upon his wrist or fist, and the lettering states, in Latin, "Where Harold

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the English chief and his knights ride to Bosham." The succeeding scene, which is labelled "The Church," shows Harold and a companion entering a building; and the next one shows a section of a larger edifice, with a farewell feast taking place in an upper chamber. Then follow scenes of embarkation, disembarkation, the seizure of Harold on landing in Normandy by Guy Count of Ponthieu, his imprisonment, conferences between him and his captor, the arrival of messengers from William to the Count demanding the transfer of the imprisoned Harold, and the eventual compliance with this command, and his reception at the palace of the Duke.

A hostile expedition into Brittany is depicted, in which Duke William made use of the services of the stalwart Harold and his companions. Mount St. Michael is shown, with the neighbouring quicksands, over which Harold carries one man on his back while dragging another across by the arm, and a horseman is represented as pitched over his horse's head: "Here Harold the Earl dragged them out of the quicksand," the legend says. The combined forces arrive at Dol, and Conan Count of Brittany betakes himself to flight, in the words of the legend, but makes a stand at Dinan, where, however, he at last gives up the keys to one of his opponents on the point of his lance, who receives them also on the point of his lance, both lances being decorated with small banners. In recognition of his services in this expedition, Duke William confers on the Saxon Earl the honour of knighthood, and is represented as placing a helmet on his head and fastening the straps of his hauberk.

A succeeding scene shows Harold standing between a reliquary and an altar, and taking the oath of which we have heard so much; and the next two depict him returning to England, and then repairing to King Edward.

In the adjoining presentment Harold is crowned, and the new

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monarch is seen seated on a throne with a sceptre in one hand and an orb surmounted by a cross in the other, and with Stigand, archbishop, by his side. At this point the marvelling at the comet is depicted. Immediately afterwards the scene is changed to Normandy, and an English ship is shown arriving there, which is supposed to have conveyed the news of Harold's coronation.

The next scene is headed, "Here Duke William commanded ships to be built," and the Conqueror is delineated as seated in his palace conversing with a personage who from his tonsure is identified as his uterine brother Odo, Bishop of Bayeux. The processes of hewing down trees and building of ships are then portrayed, followed by the launching, arming, and provisioning of them; and afterwards by the voyage of the King and his army in a fleet of eighteen vessels across the sea to Pevensy. We are shown the landing of horses and the setting out of foraging parties. Preparations for a banquet follow, and then the principal personages are seen eating and drinking at two tables, one of which seems to be made of two shields, and the other to be of semicircular form, with the guests seated on one side of it, and a page, waiting on bended knee, on the other.

In the next presentment a scout is shown giving information to Harold of William's approach: "This man brings word to Harold the King respecting Duke William's army," the legend says. The broidery then shows the invader exhorting his soldiers, and the great onslaught follows, at an early stage of which the deaths of Lewin and Gurth, brothers of Harold, are delineated.

The next inscription says, "Here fell together English and French in battle"; and below it is a terrible encounter, in which men and horses are represented in wild entanglement, some of them almost upside down, or falling on their heads in their death

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agonies. The ground is strewed with the wounded, and the lower border is filled with what we now describe as casualties. The heads of several of the warriors are lying at a considerable distance from their bodies, marking the violence of the combatants. Under the legend, "Harold rex interfectus est," we see the mighty Saxon on foot taking an arrow out of his eye, and again, finally falling to the ground facing a horseman whose weapon appears to have given the fatal finishing-stroke. There is one more knot of combatants, men on foot contending against horsemen; and then the work, now drawing to its close, begins to represent the flight of the Saxons pursued by the Normans; and the linen is damaged and the lower border missing. The defeated troops are represented by two rows of figures smaller than the rest, one above the other, of which the upper ones, with a single exception, are on foot and the lower on horseback; and the work is at an end.

Mr. Simpson then described an African play which was arranged to be a feature of interest at the Mid-summer Examination, the chief scenes of which were laid in Caffraria in Africa, one of the actors being the well-known Wolfe Hay, afterwards a General in her late Majesty's Army, and conspicuous for bravery in Africa. This, combined with John Moffat also in the play, reads strangely to-day—that, on the stage at Bruce's School in the early 'fifties, Dr. Bruce should have arranged such a play, the chief scene showing an English officer, in scarlet uniform, in a jungle surrounded by Kaffirs in appropriate costume (or rather with as little as possible, their bodies being stained,

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and skins thrown around them) ferociously rushing with spears in hand, threatening death, and singing the following refrain:—

“Stab him, spear him, club him;  
Make his life's blood flow.  
Stab him, spear him, club him;  
Lay the villain low.”

But just as they were on the point of despatching him, a band of English soldiers came to the rescue. Mr. Simpson went on to tell that on another occasion there was a debate, which took place on “breaking-up day,” the subject being—“Were the French or the English to blame for the burning of Joan of Arc?” in which he took part, being on the French side, and he still retains the copy of his speech. Another interesting event was when Dr. Bruce got his degree of Doctor, on which occasion there was a great reunion of old pupils, and Mr. Simpson had to make a speech on behalf of his fellow-pupils, and propose the health of the new Doctor. Later the same evening, Mr. John Henry Burn, an Old Boy, sang in the drawing-room, “Alonzo the Brave and the Fair Imogen” and “Lord Lovel,” two songs very much in vogue at that period; and Mr. Burn in after-years delighted his hearers with the same good old songs. Before sitting down, Mr. Simpson gracefully referred to some of the old masters, but there were not many Old Boys present who could remember Mr. Peters, Mr.



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Hamond (French master), and Mr. Tebay (mathematical master). The latter afterwards became a Senior Wrangler. He was a Lancashire man, and on one occasion, in referring to a diagram on the blackboard, he said very emphatically to one of the boys, "I don't mean the angle at 'hen' (N); I mean the angle at 'hell' (L)." Such slips, however, only occurred in his excited moments. This little "tit-bit" was well nursed to finish with, and fairly roused the Old Boys to applaud enthusiastically.

The Holiday Song followed, as usual, after which Sir GEORGE HARE PHILIPSON, in a few well-chosen remarks, proposed the healths of the Vice-Chairmen, Mr. William J. Scott and Dr. Robert Clark Newton. Having spoken at previous dinners, Sir George considerably curtailed his remarks, in the course of which he referred to the number of Bruce's boys who had embraced the medical profession, including, of course, one of the present Vice-Chairmen, to whom he made some very kindly and no doubt deserved references.

Mr. WILLIAM J. SCOTT, being a Boy of the 'forties, replied first, in his humorous style, reminding us of the winter evenings of his school-days, when many of the outlying streets, lighted by oil-lamps, left opportunity for all kinds of mischief after school-hours.

Dr. ROBERT CLARK NEWTON said he preferred to take a more sober view of his school-days, and caused no little amusement by at once recalling his first fight

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(no doubt a very sober matter to him, hence the laugh), and finishing with a few well-chosen remarks; and the toast of "The Next Merry Meeting" following, cabs and trains were next in request.

"Care to our coffin adds a nail, no doubt;  
And every grin so merry draws one out."

—JOHN WOLCOT.

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### FIFTH ANNUAL DINNER, 8th JANUARY, 1901.

"The true, strong, and sound mind is the mind that can embrace equally great things and small"—JOHNSON.

This was perhaps the most successful gathering of the "Bruce's Old Boys," the guest of the evening being Sir Gainsford Bruce, the distinguished judge, grandson of Mr. JOHN BRUCE, father of the revered Doctor, and founder of the famous Percy Street Academy. About seventy of the Boys sat down to dinner. Professor Annandale, F.R.C.S., F.R.S.E., of Edinburgh, presided. Mr. E. W. Jacob, C.E., and Sir George Hare Philipson occupied the vice-chairs. As usual, the toast of "The Queen" was most loyally responded to. The Hon. Secretary, Mr. J. H. Gibson, then read some very interesting letters from distinguished Old Boys who were unable to be present. Amongst others who



PROFESSOR THOMAS ANNANDALE,  
M.D., F.R.C.S., F.R.S.E.



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wrote were Sir Lowthian Bell, Bart., Sir Charles Mark Palmer, Bart., M.P., Sir George Barclay Bruce, Mr. W. S. Robson, K.C., M.P., Mr. Joseph Dickinson of Pendleton, Mr. J. L. Ingledew, Mr. J. Bell Simpson, and others.

Mr. ARCHIBALD REED proposed the toast of "The Memory of the Old School," given "in a very eloquent and telling speech" (as the reporter of *The Daily Journal* was gracious enough to allow). He took us far back beyond the memories of any present, and caused no little amusement by commencing his remarks with the year 1815, in which year, he said, a boy arrived at Bruce's School on a "cuddy," but that boy, Bobby Stephenson, was no donkey, as his after-life showed. His father, George Stephenson, was engaged at Killingworth Colliery, so the boy had five miles each way to journey daily. Robert Stephenson left a monument behind him which we can look upon with pride even to-day—viz., the High Level Bridge which unites Newcastle and Gateshead, in which work he was ably assisted by Mr. Thomas E. Harrison, who afterwards became Engineer-in-chief to the North Eastern Railway. Later in life Robert Stephenson's connection with the name of Bruce continued, for while he constructed the celebrated bridge across the river St. Lawrence, at Montreal, he had Mr. G. B. Bruce as an understudy, and the year before the bridge was formally opened by the Prince of Wales, Mr. Bruce was sent out to Canada to examine the entire bridge, and test

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the same, as it was stipulated in the contract that the bridge had to be approved completely to the satisfaction of our Old Boy, Stephenson, who himself, not being able at the moment to leave England, found a substitute in another Old Boy, the Sir George Barclay Bruce of to-day. With our guest of to-night and Sir George may be mentioned other Old Boys, who have attained honoured titles at her Majesty's hands. Have we not on our *menu* to-night the names of Sir Lowthian Bell, Sir Charles Mark Palmer, Sir George H. Philipson, and Sir Wemyss Reid, besides the knowledge that Robert Stephenson himself had made known at a banquet of four hundred gentlemen in Newcastle, on the 30th July 1850, on the opening of the Central Station, the Hon. Henry Liddell in the chair, that he had been offered by her Majesty the honour of knighthood, and had declined it (solely for private reasons). Yes, continued Mr. Reed, it was a great school—the learned professions being well represented, as well as mechanical, civil, and mining engineers, and commercial life. Among other interesting reminiscences of the old school, not forgetting to mention that it was no ordinary school, for were there not boarders from all parts of the world—Mexico, Chili, Canada, Italy, France, Spain, and Africa? When the Oxford Local Examinations were first thrown open to the public, Dr. Bruce sent up five boys, and they all passed, one of them, Robert Thorburn, with the honour of the Associate of Arts. At the jubilee of the school in

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the year 1856, Edward W. Jacob carried off the gold medal for being the best all-round scholar in the school, and Robert Thorburn the silver medal, as a good second to him. Mr. Reed went on to say: Like other boys we had our play-time, both in the school and out of it; but we had to be extra careful during class-hours not to let Scott, the writing-master, catch us at it, as he was an extra good "marksman" with that strap with the burnt end which he kept in his waistcoat pocket. Who can forget Robertson ("Nix") if ever he had been hit over the knuckles with a "bit of chalk" thrown with the precision of a Bisley prize-winner? Some of the younger Boys will remember Cameron "Frisky-Slippers," who followed Scott in the writing-room, and who introduced steel pens, for in Scott's time we were taught with quills. We must have a passing word for Luneberg, who instructed the young ideas in German. He was a very stout person, and overbalanced himself while looking out of an upper window in Blackett Street, falling a considerable height with very little damage to himself, fortunately. Last, Mr. Reed said, but by no means least, "Betty" Garven, dear old soul, with his "Yes, boys." About the year 1854 or 1855, the Tyne being frozen over from Scotswood down to below the Tyne Bridge (no Swing Bridge then), nearly all the boys and teachers went skating, the school having a holiday the whole of one day. Carts and horses, sledges, etc., passed over at all parts of the river. Mr. Reed said he skated with Mr. Lamb (a

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teacher), at the end of the day, from Scotswood to the Close, homewards. Then in 1854 the great fire, when both Newcastle and Gateshead were in flames for days, through an explosion which took place in the latter town. So severe was the shock that scarcely a whole pane of glass was left in the town. The school was practically empty that day beyond the boarders. The absentee-book would have been filled if there had been any boy present to write it up. Who can forget the excursions up the West Railway-line every September? Fourstones, Haltwhistle, Greenhead, Bardon Mill, and Gilsland (then Rosehill) all had their turn, as the dear old Doctor could not in his conscience allow his boys to spend a *whole day without some instruction*, so we were either near or about the Roman Wall "Borcovicus, the Cohors Prima-Tungorum," at which place didn't we enjoy our lunch on the grass, and poor old "Jim" Nichol, the Doctor's man-servant, fixing down our dinner-cloth with the "sacred" stones? Mr. Reed said he would not dwell on the playgrounds, as their memory was not so lasting; yet, once having played "one-catch-all," it can never be forgotten, particularly if you were the last one to be "cop'd," and had to go into class *minus* part of your clothing. The game became so boisterous that the Doctor put it down entirely, and the boys walked about like lost sheep for days before they could turn to "foot and a half" or "bed-stocks," or the milder one of marbles. Then the slides in winter down by the kitchen-door in the low





ARCHIBALD REED.



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yard! He remembered once being put in a "dead funk" by a towering boy following so close behind him on the slide that he expected to be "heeled" every minute. However, when he got safely to the end, he found it was Gainsford Bruce, who had come home from college at the nick of time to meet some of the big boys whom he had left shortly before. Mr. Reed said he could not close without referring to the Doctor's Sunday-morning class. He had often been puzzled to know why he was in it at all, as it was mostly a boarders' class. They read the *Pilgrim's Progress* for an hour before church; and at Christmas they had the wind-up tea-party for the "good Sunday-morning boys," when Miss Bruce joined in the amusements to further their enjoyment. But even then a time came when the evening fell flat, and the Doctor said, "Now, boys, I wish you to enjoy yourselves in your own way. Can any one sing a song?" And would you believe it, said Mr. Reed, some sneak piped out, "Yes; Archie Reed can sing 'The Cork Leg.'" That was enough, it had to be done.

The toast was most heartily drunk, and, as usual after this toast, the whole company rose and sang, as only Bruce boys can sing (borne of such pleasant memories), the stirring "Breaking-up Song" with as much ardour, or even more than when they sang it as boys at school. How all seemed to catch the spirit of it from the first words, "Rejoice, good comrades, all rejoice."

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## SCHOOLBOYS' BREAKING-UP SONG.

MIDSUMMER.

Music by M. LIDDELL.

*Moderato.*

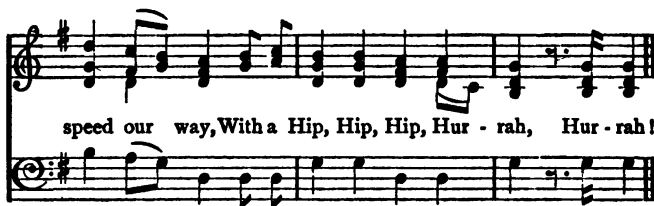
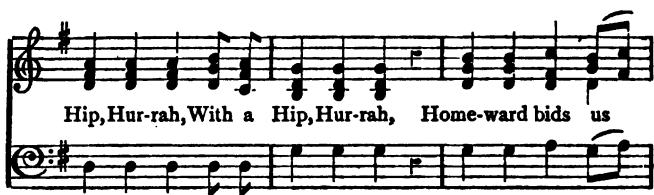
Re - joice, good com-rades, all re - joice, Mid-

sum - mer, with her cheer - ful voice, Home-ward bids us

speed our way, With a Hip, Hip, Hip, Hur - rah, Hur - rah !

With a Hip, Hur-rah, With a Hip, Hur-rah, With a

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"Dull boys are they who never play,"  
The axiom's clear as this bright day,  
Off, then, come away, away!  
With a hip, hip, hip! hurrah, hurrah!

Roman lore and demonstration,  
Gallic sounds and cube equation,  
Good-bye, till another day,  
With a hip, hip, hip! hurrah, hurrah!

Homeric Greek, and such like stuff,  
In school-time you are well enough;  
Now we'll try a new essay,  
With a hip, hip, hip! hurrah, hurrah!

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For other themes our thoughts demand,  
The fishing-rod, the pebbly strand,  
The purple heath, the billowy way,  
With a hip, hip, hip ! hurrah, hurrah !

A jolly season, lads, be ours ;  
A happy season too be theirs,  
Who've led us on our classic way,  
With a hip, hip, hip ! hurrah, hurrah !

The day we've longed for's come at length,  
We'll then, with all our youthful strength,  
Hail the joyous holiday,  
With a hip, hip, hip ! hurrah, hurrah !

The CHAIRMAN then proposed the toast of the evening, "Our Guest." In doing so, he first referred with pleasure to his own presence in his native town, and the recollections which had been recalled to him by the events of the evening. They were delighted to do the highest honour to their guest that night, because he was an example of a Newcastle boy fighting his way with dogged perseverance, and by his abilities rising to the high position which he now holds. (Prolonged applause.) Having recalled several interesting reminiscences in which Mr. Justice Bruce figured in the early days of boyhood, Professor Annandale referred to the remarkable progress of Sir Gainsford in his professional life. While he was in Parliament every member of the



THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE BRUCE,  
KNT., D.C.L.





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House had the utmost respect for him as a good and honest man. With regard to his present judicial position, all present would have some idea of the number of barristers of ability and character in this country, and therefore it was perhaps one of the best proofs of the ability of their guest that he should have attained the high position of one of her Majesty's Judges. (Loud applause.) He believed there was no judge on the English Bench who was more respected than Mr. Justice Bruce, not only as a judge and as a man, but for his law, because he understood it was a very rare thing indeed for any judgment of Mr. Justice Bruce to be appealed against. (Loud applause.)

The toast was drunk with great cordiality, the chorus of "He's a jolly good fellow" being sung with much spirit.

Sir GAINSFORD BRUCE, on rising, was received with vociferous cheering. He said he thanked them sincerely for their good wishes, which were not the less welcome to him because they had been conveyed by their Chairman, a late schoolfellow of his own, and an esteemed friend. He spoke as to the pleasure it gave him to look back upon that reunion of old friends, which carried them back to their old school-days—the days in which they lived in the ardour and vigour of youth, full of hopes, and forgetful of those winds that scatter, and those storms that blast the garden of life. It was pleasant to look back, after the struggles of life, to the early days when all was bright, and pleasant,

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and fair, and derive hope and consolation from them; but, whilst it was pleasant to look back to the days of youth, it was well for some of them, who, like himself, were beginning to grow old, to remember that there was some advantage to be gained from the journey through life. Time tries all. Time tries friendship. Old friends are better than new. The writer Ecclesiasticus says, "Forsake not an old friend; for the new is not comparable to him; a new friend is as new wine; when it is old thou shalt drink it with pleasure." They were all old friends there, and they had known each other from boyhood. The success, he thought, of their schoolmaster, whom they all revered, was owing, not so much to his many accomplishments, as to the great interest and sympathy he took in his work. He loved the boys, and he was able to remove their prejudices; he had great facility for teaching, and teaching pleasantly. It was a pleasure for him to teach, it was a pleasure to be taught by him. There was another feature of the school. Dr. Bruce was most anxious to preserve in the school a high moral and religious character. He always taught them that uprightness and honourable conduct were the chief glory of life, believing that the fear of the Lord was the beginning of wisdom, and as he used to say, "When there was no beginning, there was not likely to be any ending"; and thus he lived as he died, honoured and respected, and the traditions of the school had lived, and he thought

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they might say, because he laboured thus to uphold the high position of the school, they were proud of the title of "Bruce's Boys." He had only to thank them most heartily for the honour they had done him. He felt it not the less to be an honour to him, because it was plain to him, it was for the regard they had for the honour and character of his father. As they honoured and revered his character, let him say this, that he as his son had a right to say, he honoured and revered his character a hundred times more. The Judge's remarks were listened to with rapt attention. Most interesting was the remainder of the evening, especially the toast of "The Chairman."

Mr. EDWARD W. JACOB (the Gold Medallist of the School, 1856), in responding as one of the Vice-Chairmen, made an excellent speech, touching on the memories of his school-days and his after-career, which he said would never have been so successful but for the early scientific knowledge he gained from Dr. Bruce.

Sir GEORGE HARE PHILIPSON also replying to the toast of "The Vice-Chairmen," spoke very eloquently and feelingly of the memories of the guest of the evening—the Judge—and also made some very eulogistic remarks upon his mother, as a lady endowed with kindness of heart, great amiability, and high Christian principles, and one who was ever occupied with charitable or philanthropic work, endeavouring to alleviate the condition of the suffering poor, and to lighten their condition and difficulties, besides being of great assistance to the

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Doctor in the motherly part she took in looking after the boys domiciled in 101 Percy Street.

Mr. E. T. NISBET gave an adaptation of his own, *after* Winthrop M. Praed, of—

## SCHOOL AND SCHOOL-FELLOWS.

### 1

LONG years ago I made a mock  
Of filthy trades and traffics;  
I wonder'd what they meant by stock;  
I wrote delightful sapphics;  
I knew the streets of Rome and Troy;  
I supp'd with Fates and Muses—  
Long years ago I was a boy,  
A happy boy, at Bruce's.

### 2

Long years ago ! how many a thought  
Of faded pains and pleasures  
Those whisper'd syllables have brought  
From memory's hoarded treasures !  
The yards, the moor, the games, the books,  
The glories and disgraces,  
The voices of dear friends, the looks  
Of old familiar faces !

### 3

Where are my friends? I am alone;  
No playmate shares my beaker;



REV. JAMES B. THORBURN.



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Some lie beneath the churchyard stone,  
And some—before the Speaker;  
And some now fill Professors' chairs,  
Dame Fortune some has slighted;  
Some wallow deep in mining shares,  
While four or five are knighted.

### 4

Tom Reid, who used to gladden eyes,  
And never make professions!  
On Brontë girls writes rhapsodies,  
And chants our vast possessions!  
Gain. Bruce keeps order in the land,  
A Justice quite gigantic;  
Poor Newton's feet repose unscann'd  
Beneath the wide Atlantic.

### 5

Reciter Thorburn with his kilt,  
At Widdrington does duty;  
Bill Robson who found Bow a jilt,  
Finds South Shields quite a beauty;  
And many who were good at Greek,  
Have made disastrous endings;  
And Simpson studies week by week,  
How to increase his vendings!

### 6

George Philipson whom Nature plann'd  
To be a rare example,

## Bruce's School

Of all her virtues mild and bland,  
Is still a walking sample;  
And Arch. Reed who at "one-catch-all,"  
One day quite lost his collar,  
Could now with Falstaff take a fall,  
I'll stake my bottom dollar!

### 7

And I am eight and fifty now,—  
The world's cold chains have bound me;  
And darker shades are on my brow,  
And sadder scenes around me;  
I wish that I could run away  
From House, and Court, and Levee,  
When bearded men appear to-day  
Just Bruce's boys grown heavy.

### 8

That I could bask in childhood's sun,  
And dance o'er childhood's roses,  
And find huge wealth in one-pound-one,  
Vast wit in broken noses;  
Play "paper chase" down Leazes Lane,  
And roam by Jesmond spruces,—  
That I could be a boy again,—  
A happy boy—at Bruce's.

WINTHROP M. PRAED

(ADAPTED BY E. T. N.).

The evening concluded, as is customary, by all



## Sixth Annual Dinner

present singing "Auld Lang Syne," linked together in the good old style.

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### SIXTH ANNUAL DINNER, 9th JANUARY, 1902.

The Sixth Annual Dinner at the County Hotel, 9th January 1902, was a great success, with the Hon. Mr. Justice Bruce in the chair, and Mr. William Henry Cooke, B.A., Barrister-at-Law, in the vice-chair. The dinner was our first held after our well-beloved King Edward VII. had succeeded to the throne, and the first toast from the chair was "The King," accompanied by some touching remarks, feelingly uttered, by our learned Chairman, who quickly followed with "Queen Alexandra, Prince and Princess of Wales, and Royal Family." Liberty to smoke being given, Alderman Dr. W. H. Newton (The Mayor of Newcastle) proposed "The Memory of the Old School," which the Old Boys look upon as *the* toast on these occasions; or, to put it in other words, it is "the toast of the evening," as we are accustomed to say. The "Holiday Song" put every one in good form for the following Paper which the Vice-Chairman, Mr. W. H. Cooke, read on

### JOURNALISM AT THE PERCY STREET ACADEMY.

I chanced a short time ago to be dining with an old fellow-pupil at Percy Street Academy—Sir Wemyss Reid—at the

## Bruce's School

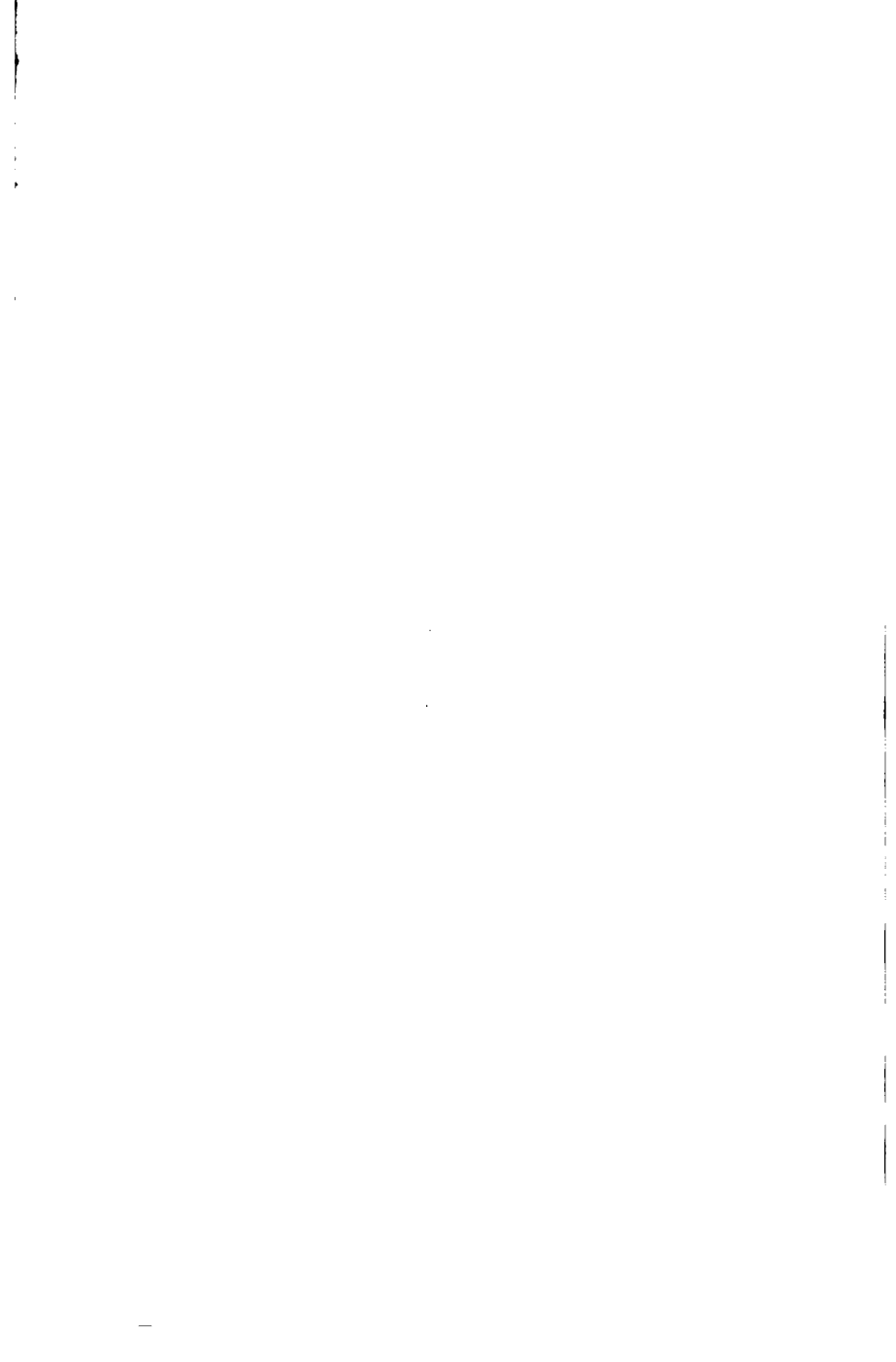
Reform Club in Pall Mall, and he showed me, in the course of our after-dinner conversation, a letter which he had received from Mr. Archibald Reed, one of the organisers of this dinner, in which that gentleman inquired of Sir Wemyss Reid: "Had you anything to do with a halfpenny paper which was started at the school by Cooke and Quelch, both of whom, I believe, are now dead?" In this last gloomy surmise, however, Mr. Archibald Reed was wrong. I, obviously, am still in the land of the living; whilst Quelch, I am glad to say, was heard of by his relatives only the other day from North Carolina, U.S.A., where he is, I understand, engaged in the pastoral pursuit of farming.

As, however, judging from the letter which Sir Wemyss Reid showed me, there seems to be a little curiosity felt by some of the Old Boys as to the history of the journal in question—which was called the SCHOOL GAZETTE—it occurred to me that it might be well for me to jot down a few Notes on "Journalism at Percy Street Academy," to be read to this friendly after-dinner gathering to-night.

To begin then. I may, as one of the founders of the SCHOOL GAZETTE, at once say that it was not "a halfpenny paper." It was much better than that—it was a penny one. I have a complete file of it at home, and each one of its numbers states on the first page that its title is the SCHOOL GAZETTE, and that its "price" is "one penny." The first number bears date "September 12th, 1857," and the opening words of the introductory leader are as follow:—"Having heard that at some schools such papers as this have been edited, we thought that such a thing would be practicable here. We therefore determined to publish a paper which would combine these three qualities—Amusement, Information, and Cheapness, and by this means be able to give all the news of the day. This paper,"



**WILLIAM H. COOKE, B.A.**  
**(BARRISTER-AT-LAW).**



## Sixth Annual Dinner

the article proceeds, "will contain continued stories, the news of the school, editorial articles, and random readings." This introductory article is signed with the initials "J. B. Q.," which show that it proceeded from the pen of Mr. John Bewick Quelch, who was subsequently a student at and Graduate in Arts of Durham University; afterwards a student for the Bar at the Middle Temple, London, and who is now, as I have just said, engaged in farming in North Carolina.

In accordance with the promise that the paper would publish "continued stories," the first number contained the beginning of what promised—for alas! it was never completed—to be a very thrilling romance from my own unworthy pen. It was entitled "The Brigand Chief," and opened in true blood-curdling style by depicting a terrible storm, "which was raging in the forests which skirt the regions about Montpelier in France," through which—need I add?—the inevitable "solitary traveller" who, "though plainly dressed, wore an unmistakable air of command," is presently seen "making his way."

The "School News" in the first number of the SCHOOL GAZETTE consisted of two paragraphs—one of which is headed "Furious Combat," and describes a regular stand-up fight which "took place in the Middle Room"—and I am sorry to have to add upon a Sunday afternoon—"between two boarders, Mr. Robert Forster and Mr. Charles Davis." Mr. Davis, according to the veracious reporter of the SCHOOL GAZETTE, "was eventually compelled to retire from the field with a face black and blue, besides having to suffer the mortification of being what is commonly called 'well licked.'" Mr. Millar, one of the Masters, "attempted," the reporter adds, "to put a stop to the combat, but was most ignominiously knocked over." The second paragraph of "School News" is short. It is entitled "A Marriage Celebration," and records that "on the

## Bruce's School

marriage of Mr. R. W. Falconar and Miss E. H. Walker, on the 9th instant, the cannons belonging to the Percy Iron Works were fired repeatedly, amidst the admiring plaudits of the boys, and to the great horror and disgust of Mr. McLeod." Mr. McLeod was, I may remark parenthetically, one of the then Assistant-Masters of the school, against whom the Editors of the SCHOOL GAZETTE—for reasons best known to themselves—evidently entertained a grudge. The "Latest Intelligence" is boldly asserted in the paper to have been received "By Submarine and Electric Telegraph" at "the SCHOOL GAZETTE Office." As a matter of fact, it was, as I very well remember, copied verbatim from the latest number procurable of the *Northern Daily Express*—a paper which was the pioneer of daily journalism in Newcastle-on-Tyne, and which was then published in West Clayton Street, just about opposite to the end of Pink Lane. The *Northern Daily Express*—now defunct—was then under the editorship of one of the most brilliant journalists of his day, Mr. James Bolivar Manson; and it was in its columns that an old "Bruce Boy," Sir Wemyss Reid—now himself a distinguished journalist—first tried his 'prentice hand. The rest of the first number of the SCHOOL GAZETTE is made up of what would nowadays be technically called "padding," in the shape of articles called "The Curious Rain," "Random Readings," "Transpositions," and "Conundrums."

The second number of the SCHOOL GAZETTE affords abundant evidence that "personal journalism" is no new thing, for a violent onslaught is made in it upon one of the boys then at the school, by name John Treeve Edgcome—his father was, I remember, a doctor in Pilgrim Street—who had written a letter to the Editors of the SCHOOL GAZETTE suggesting that by the aid of what he was good enough to term "its influential

## Sixth Annual Dinner

columns" there might be secured for the boys at Percy Street Academy two half-holidays a week for play, instead of only one. "We must confess," observe the Editors of the SCHOOL GAZETTE with severity, in commenting upon this suggestion in a stinging leading article, "that it appears to us that our correspondent has had too much play already, and that his brain is rather turned by it—thus exemplifying the Latin proverb, 'Quo plus habent eo plus cupiunt.'" The readers of the SCHOOL GAZETTE are then bidden "to observe the absurdity of the suggestion upon which *the little gentleman*"—this was an unkind cut, for John Treeve Edgcome was, as I well remember, a boy of small stature—"most likely prides himself." Master John Treeve Edgcome is further informed that the Editors of the SCHOOL GAZETTE "hope" that he will send them "no more such nonsensical, impracticable, foolish, absurd propositions, as they will not have so much notice taken of them as this has had, but will be instantly consigned to the flames." Immediately below this scathing leader there appear "Answers to Correspondents," in which the receipt of the letter of "J. T. Edgcome" is acknowledged, and he is curtly informed that his communication is "Quite ridiculous"; whilst "J. Hope"—in whose name I recognise that of Dr. John Hope, an old and now, alas! deceased school friend, who had evidently forwarded a suggestion to the Editors—is mildly replied to in the words "We do not think it would answer in this school." In this number of the SCHOOL GAZETTE there also appear what are described as "Important Notices to Our Correspondents." These Notices are rather quaint, for correspondents are informed in them that "All Communications to the Editors of the SCHOOL GAZETTE are to be either put into Mr. J. B. Quelch's desk in Mr. McLeod's room, or else sent in to Mr. J. G. Black's, 46 Clayton Street West. Letters not having

## Bruce's School

real signatures will," it is added, "receive no attention. The Editors do not guarantee insertion to every letter which they receive. N.B.—Advertisements are"—not that we ever got any that I am aware of!—"inserted at one halfpenny a line." Under "School News" there also appears in this second number an account from the pen of, if I remember aright, my oldest school friend, Black—now Dr. J. Gordon Black of Harrogate—of the Annual School Excursion, which that year was to Bardon Mill and the Roman Wall. Dr. Black records that "When we arrived at Bardon Mill, we had some milk and ship-biscuits, which were so tough that we could scarcely get our editorial teeth through them. The Doctor"—*i.e.*, Dr. Bruce—the report proceeds, "went on to the Roman Camp with some of the boys who were fond of antiquities, and who obtained several pieces of pots which the Britons had used, and on the possession of which we wish them joy. Then, at last, on their return we obtained," says Dr. Black, heaving an evident sigh of satisfaction, "our dinner, which," he, perhaps somewhat unnecessarily, adds, "we were not long in despatching." In the "Latest Intelligence by Submarine and Electric Telegraph to the SCHOOL GAZETTE Office," in this second number, there is an item of some public interest even yet, for it states that "The Marriage of the Princess Royal"—*i.e.*, of the late Empress Frederic of Germany—"to Prince Frederic of Prussia is fixed for the 18th January 1858, and the 3rd February 1858 is mentioned as the date of their entry into Berlin. Prince Frederic Wilhelm will pay a visit," it is added, "to her Majesty in November."

The third number of the SCHOOL GAZETTE refers, under the heading of "School News," to the "Retirement of Mr. Ramsay, the respected Writing-Master of this Academy." Mr. Ramsay is kindly assured by the Boy-Editors of the SCHOOL GAZETTE



## Sixth Annual Dinner

that he has filled the post "in a highly meritorious manner." The same paragraph records that the Editors—who, as I have already said, evidently had a grudge against Mr. McLeod, who, I think, used to be called by the boys "Buzzy McLeod," or more shortly "Buzzy"—"rejoice to add that Mr. McLeod has taken his departure." The Editors "wish" that they "could say for him as for Mr. Ramsay" that "he carries their best wishes with him, but such is not the case. The whole period of his stay with us," the Editors remark, "has been characterised by anything but the pleasantness which ought to exist between master and pupil," and they therefore "bid him adieu with the greatest of pleasure." The paragraph then proceeds as follows (and this is interesting as introducing the name of the late Rev. Gilbert Robertson, who was for so long associated with Dr. Bruce in the management of Percy Street Academy):—"We hail with joy the return of Mr. Robertson to the scene of his labours, but space will not allow us to descant upon this subject—in fact we feel that it is needless, as he has endeared himself to all of his pupils, and therefore they can give him a much better welcome than any that we can."

Up to this date the bottom of the last page of each number of the SCHOOL GAZETTE had always borne the words: "Edited and Published by J. B. Quelch, W. H. Cooke, J. G. Black, and R. W. G. Hunter"; but I now approach a painful period in the history of the journal. If any curious reader were to refer to the fourth page of the fourth number of the SCHOOL GAZETTE, he would find that its last lines announce that that number was "Edited and Published by W. H. Cooke and J. B. Quelch." What then had become of "J. G. Black" and "R. W. G. Hunter"? The cause of the absence of the name of "R. W. G. Hunter"—now, I believe, the Rev. R. W. G. Hunter, a Wesleyan minister, and resident the last time I heard

## Bruce's School

of his whereabouts in Cumberland—is explained in an editorial article on the first page of the fourth number. This article—which was, I remember, written by Quelch—is impressively headed, “Fall of Youthful Ambition.” It opens with the portentous statement: “A short time ago we allowed a youth full of ambition, and aspiring to try his hand at editing a journal, to take part with us in the publication of the SCHOOL GAZETTE. We, of course,” the article proceeds, “thought him to be an open-spirited fellow. All went on prosperously for seven or eight weeks, but at the end of that time ‘Youthful Ambition’—under which engaging description R. W. G. Hunter was, I may explain, referred to—“having seen a scrap of paper lying somewhere or other, thought it to be some that ought to have been applied to the uses of the SCHOOL GAZETTE. He accordingly charged us with robbing him of his share, and as much as called us ‘thieves and vagabonds.’ Not being accustomed to being addressed in such flattering terms, we, in the most polite manner and with the utmost delicacy, informed him that it was obnoxious to us, and thereupon thought no more of the matter.” It would seem, however, that “the little rift within the lute” thus disclosed widened, for the article proceeds to state that R. W. G. Hunter later on repeated his charges, whereupon “We, thinking that no paper could flourish when such mean-minded persons had anything to do with it, kindly paid him all the money that he had advanced, together with his share of the profits, and then ignominiously turned him out from amongst us. Such,” the SCHOOL GAZETTE solemnly concludes, “was the inglorious end of ‘Youthful Ambition’s’ literary exertions, instead of being benefited by his past editorship, he is degraded and sunk lower than before. Reader, we have said enough, as he himself will bear ample evidence of his disgrace.”

The cause of the absence of Dr. J. G. Black's name from this

## Sixth Annual Dinner

fourth number was, I may remark, owing to a disagreement with his co-editors as to the propriety of inserting a paragraph in the paper, which I recollect very well that I wrote myself, upon the urgent necessity for—it being then the month of October—fires being immediately lighted in the school-rooms. Dr. Black's retirement was, however, only temporary, for his name, I am glad to note, reappears upon the next two numbers of the paper, which were the last that were ever published.

Under the heading of "School News," in the fourth number of the SCHOOL GAZETTE, there appears, by the way, a paragraph relating to a then pupil of the school named Gilbert Millican. Gilbert Millican, as I recall him, was by several years the senior of all the boys at Percy Street Academy in the autumn of 1857. He came, I believe, from North Sunderland, and was a big, broad-shouldered youth of, I should think, eighteen or nineteen years of age at least. "We have great pleasure in announcing," says the paragraph in question, "the return of Mr. Gilbert Millican to the scene of his studies. If anything, he looks," the SCHOOL GAZETTE observes, "more robust and strong than before the holidays, the fresh air of the North having no doubt renewed his strength and courage. We hope," the SCHOOL GAZETTE kindly adds, "that he may continue to pursue his studies here till his mind is so well stored that he need study no more." Mr. Millican's acknowledgment of this kindly reference to himself in the paper was, as I well remember, to shake his fist in my face the next time I encountered him in the school-yard! Fortunately for me, he no doubt remembered the school adage, "Hit a boy of your own size," or else I feel sure that I should have suffered severely in the flesh at the hands of such a veritable "man-mountain" as Gilbert Millican then appeared to me—a boy of fourteen—to be.

## Bruce's School

Up to this point the SCHOOL GAZETTE had had the field of journalism, so far as the same was to be found within the bounds of Percy Street Academy, to itself; but this was no longer to be the case. The leader in No. 5 of the SCHOOL GAZETTE—viz., that for the week ending November 7th, 1857—is, I find, entitled, "The New Paper." It begins by remarking that, "During the last week a new paper has appeared called by the very monosyllabic and euphonious name of *The Clown*." If my memory does not deceive me, *The Clown* was started by John Treeve Edgcome, who had been, you will remember, severely castigated in the second number of the SCHOOL GAZETTE, for suggesting that there should be two half-holidays a week in the school instead of only one. The career of *The Clown* was, however, a brief one, for in the very next number of the SCHOOL GAZETTE I find the following paragraph, which is evidently, as Artemus Ward would say, "wrote sarcastick":—"It is with deep regret that we learn that our old and valued friend *The Clown* has departed this life. We really hoped that we should have had the benefit of his counsel for some time to come. . . . Undeterred by the fate of *The Clown*," the paragraph proceeds, "new newspapers rise up on every side. Last Wednesday, the *Academic Times*, a diminutive paper, appeared, edited in part by our old friend 'Youthful Ambition,' who seems determined to do something to render his name famous in the annals of Percy Street Academy. The *Academic Times* contained," the paragraph adds, "amongst other things, a long account of the Newcastle Municipal Elections—no doubt from the pen of 'Our Own Correspondent,' Mr. Councillor Hunter, who will now be able, through the organ of his son, to vent his spleen about municipal affairs." My impression—but I am open to correction—is that the price of the *Academic Times* was one halfpenny; and, if that be so, Percy

## Sixth Annual Dinner

Street Academy may—it has been suggested to me by Mr. Archibald Reed—lay claim to the distinction of having given to the world its first halfpenny newspaper !

One of the “institutions” of the school to which, however, the Editors of the SCHOOL GAZETTE evidently entertained a dislike was a body called “The Youth’s General Improvement Society,” for its demise is thus recorded in what proved to be the last number of the SCHOOL GAZETTE itself—namely, number six “for the week ending November 21st, 1857” :—“We have the painful duty,” observe the Editors of the SCHOOL GAZETTE in that number, “of announcing to our readers the demise of that most respected body, viz., ‘The Youth’s General Improvement Society.’ After having lingered on a miserable existence for months, it has at length given up the ghost. The members had, we believe,” the SCHOOL GAZETTE remarks, “a regular ‘blow-out’ on Friday last, 13th November—a very appropriate conclusion, we imagine, to such a body. We also observe,” the paragraph proceeds, “that Edgcome, Hope, and Company, assisted by that eminent functionary the defunct *Clown*, are going to employ their oratorical powers in aid of a new Society—viz., ‘Dr. Bruce’s Boarders’ Association for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Lands.’ We, for our own part,” the SCHOOL GAZETTE kindly adds, “must unfeignedly wish them success in their new avocation.”

In the “Answers to Correspondents” in the last two numbers of the SCHOOL GAZETTE there occur three names which I recognise—viz, those of “J. Dickinson,” “R. Newton,” and “J. Wilkin.” A reference yesterday to the *Law List* assured me that the first-named of these, Mr. Joseph Dickinson, is still practising as a solicitor at Alston; the second is Dr. R. Clark Newton, formerly of Eldon Square in this city, and now, I believe, of Harrogate; whilst the third, James Wilkin, alas!

## Bruce's School

sleeps his last sleep in that *Campo Santo* of Newcastle—Jesmond Old Cemetery.

In glancing over the file of the SCHOOL GAZETTE one thing strikes me very much—viz., the absence of any records of scores of football or cricket matches. It is quite clear, therefore, that in the late 'fifties the playing of "set" matches did not obtain at Percy Street Academy. We played plenty of games no doubt, but they were of what I may call the "unorganised" variety. Nowadays one-half at least of the yawning columns of the SCHOOL GAZETTE would have to be devoted to the publication of "full scores" in cricket and football matches.

The SCHOOL GAZETTE was, I may add, written in manuscript—each of the Editors and Proprietors binding himself to make, or to get made for him, by hand a certain number of—I really forget how many—copies of each fortnightly issue. We, I recollect, often thought of trying to get the paper printed, and in the last number—thanks, as I well remember, to the mechanical skill of Dr. J. Gordon Black—we did succeed in getting the title of the paper printed from type. The difficulties which came in the way of our getting the whole paper printed were, however, as you will readily imagine, financial rather than mechanical.

Why the paper suddenly stopped publication with its sixth fortnightly number I do not quite remember, but I think that the near approach of the Christmas holidays had a good deal to do with it. I myself left Percy Street Academy at the Christmas Vacation of 1857—when I took part in singing the "Breaking-up Song" for the last time until after an interval of no less than forty-three years, I joined in it again at last year's dinner. Whether any future generations of "Dr. Bruce's Boys" ever tried their hands at a similar journalistic venture to



JOSEPH A. PHILIPSON.





## Sixth Annual Dinner

that of the SCHOOL GAZETTE I do not know, but, if it be possible, I should very much like to learn to-night.

Mr. JOSEPH A. PHILIPSON proposed "The Mayor and Corporation of Newcastle," and in doing so made some very interesting references to the old School, Dr. Bruce, and his father, and quoted an extract from a speech which Mr. Lowthian Bell, Mayor of Newcastle (now Sir Lowthian Bell, Bart.), made at a dinner given in 1855 at the Queen's Head Hotel, which extract, by the kind permission and assistance of Mr. Philipson, is reprinted earlier in this book. We now have great pleasure in reprinting a short extract from a letter by Robert Stephenson to Dr. Bruce, dated 2nd December 1837, in reply to congratulations on the public honours bestowed upon the famous engineer :—

"Your letter revived the recollections of our earlier days, and above all it reminded me of your worthy and esteemed parent, to whom I owe so much ; indeed it is to his tuition and methods of modelling the mind that I attribute much of my success as an engineer. It is from him that I derived my taste for mathematical pursuits and the facility I possess of applying this kind of knowledge to practical purposes."

In making the toast Mr. Philipson pointed out that the Mayor, the Sheriff (Mr. W. J. Sanderson), the Under-Sheriff (Mr. George Wilkinson) were all old Percy Street Boys, and were present at the Dinner.

## Bruce's School

The MAYOR OF NEWCASTLE suitably replied to the toast, after which

Sir GEORGE HARE PHILIPSON proposed "The Chairman."

Mr. E. T. NISBET, "Our Next Merry Meeting," and "Auld Lang Syne" closed the proceedings.

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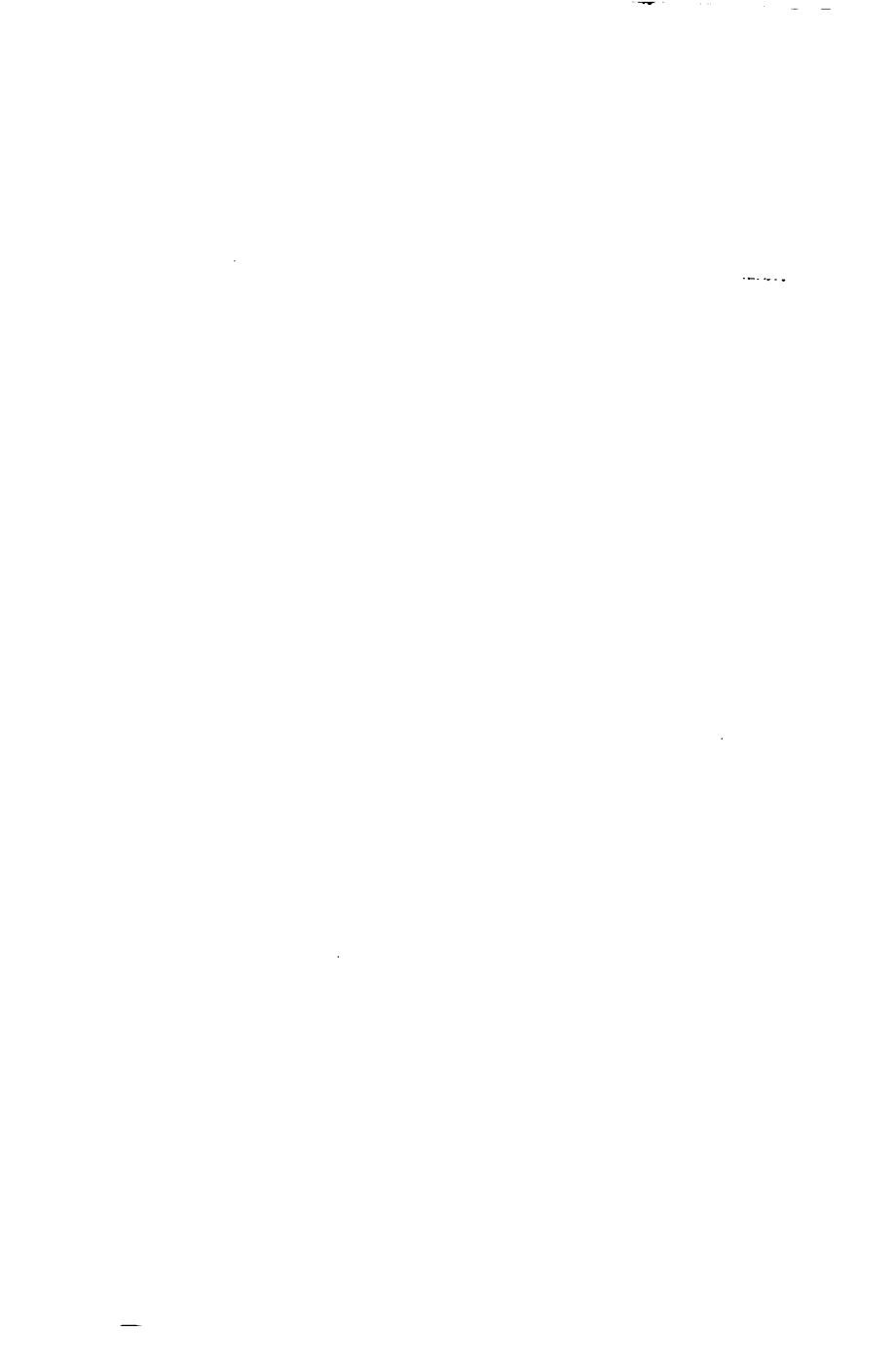
### SEVENTH ANNUAL DINNER, 7th JANUARY, 1903.

The Seventh Annual Dinner was held on 7th January 1903, Sir Wemyss Reid, LL.D., in the chair, Colonel A. S. Palmer in the vice-chair. After the usual loyal toasts had been given by the Chairman,

Mr. ANDREW YOUNG proposed "The Memory of the Old School" in a very amusing speech, going far back into the 'fifties—to those good old days and now changed times when it was possible to wade across the river Tyne at low tide. Mr. Young said it was his happiest fortune to be in touch with Dr. Bruce and Mr. Gilbert Robertson. One thing Mr. Young remembered very clearly—"the back parlour" (and no doubt many Old Boys present did also); but in justice to Mr. Young it is only right to mention that it was in connection with the writing specimens and maps which were displayed there. Others might remember it from different points of view—some agreeably, some far from it. Of the agreeable recollections one was the returning after the holiday with a cheque for the



ANDREW YOUNG.



## Seventh Annual Dinner

Account, when a wooden bowl of small silver coins of various sizes was visible, some of which eventually found their way to old Betty Coxon's round the corner. Mr. Young's memory was very sound upon events so old—bearing as it did upon many touching scenes, such as our boyish differences with the "Snapeites," the "Gladiators" in Gateshead; "shin-your-side," and marbles, of which he said he had very many more than he was entitled to (but neglected to say it was his expert play that entitled him to them)! Altogether it was a most amusing speech, and created much laughter for the Boys of his time. "The Holiday Song" with the "Hip, hip, hip!" followed as usual.

Mr. ARCHIBALD REED was then called upon by the Chairman to make a presentation of a silver cigar-box to Mr. John H. Gibson, the Honorary Secretary, for his valuable services in connection with the Annual Dinners. Mr. Reed paid Mr. Gibson a very high, but deserved, compliment for working so thoroughly in the early years of the Dinner, when his labours were extremely tedious, owing to the difficulty in finding out scholars at the School and their possible whereabouts after so many years. Mr. Gibson had hundreds of names through his hands, but a reference to the *menu* of the Third Annual Dinner (19th January 1899) will show that there were only forty-seven who sat down. Notwithstanding all his exertions, the Honorary Secretary could not lay hands on the "strong" part of the School (the *personnel* of the 'fifties), when the School was at its very acme of

## Bruce's School

fame. This fault was not Mr. Gibson's, but was traceable rather to the fact of everything being worked by a large Committee. On an Executive being appointed, who could the more readily be convened, our Honorary Secretary got his "second wind," and since then upwards of seventy have sat down. Mr. Reed pointed out that we could not hope to go beyond this, as we were a "diminishing quantity" (here a very naughty "boy" created some laughter by saying, "You are not!"). Continuing, he said that it had come to the knowledge of the Committee that some of Robertson's Boys had a doubt if it was expected they should attend. "Certainly," said Mr. Reed; "this is a Dinner intended to cover all Percy Street Boys, and it is to Robertson's Boys that we look forward to to keep 'green' the memory of our dear old School." A description of the box may be welcome to those who could not be present. It is a solid silver cigar-box, for table use, with a compartment for cigarettes; the lid is most beautifully embossed with the old School-house and other adjacent houses of the old time in Percy Street, and lettered—"Presented to Mr. John Henry Gibson by Dr. Bruce's Old Boys, for his valuable services as Honorary Secretary to the Annual Dinners. Newcastle-on-Tyne, January 7th, 1903." A quotation is also cut into the box—"All, all are gone, the old familiar places" (adapted from Charles Lamb). The box was the production of Messrs. Lister & Sons, of Grey Street, and reflects the greatest credit on Mr.



JOHN H. GIBSON.





## Seventh Annual Dinner

Stanley Castle, their manager, who carried out Mr. Reed's instructions admirably.

Mr. GIBSON then acknowledged the honour done to him in very suitable words, but no doubt was joyfully overcome by the real token of regard displayed in such a magnificent present, the nature of which had been kept a close secret from every one until the room was entered, when its glitter at the head of the table claimed every one's attention.

The Rev. RALPH W. G. HUNTER<sup>1</sup> then read a paper on

### POLITICS AT PERCY STREET ACADEMY IN THE 'FIFTIES.

#### THE HISTORY OF A SCHOOL PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION.

I have survived. I was the "Youthful Ambition" who figured so prominently in the very entertaining Paper read by my friend Mr. Cooke at your last Dinner, on "Journalism at Percy Street Academy." Imagine my amazement when I opened the pages of the printed copy, which, by his courtesy, was sent me, and found that I was the hero of the epic. I am quite unworthy of the honour which was thrust upon me.

"Youthful Ambition!" Alas, I am no longer "youthful." And as to ambitions, few remain to me now; but one of these has been to be with you, the companions of my school-days, again.

<sup>1</sup> "An honest man, close button'd to the chin,  
Broadcloth without, and a warm heart within."

—COWPER.

## Bruce's School

May I, Mr. Chairman, just refer to the challenge which the orator of last year, standing atop of the social scene, and inspired by the pleasing accompaniment of appropriate mirth, boldly hurled at a poor parson, lost somewhere, as he supposed, amongst the awful and trackless solitudes of the Cumberland Fells.

Since then, Mr. Cooke has kindly invited me to reply, and has promised me as hearty an enjoyment of any *repartee* in which I might indulge, as was called forth last year by the reading of his journalistic reminiscences. I am afraid he assumed too much for my part of the performance, when he promised that. I am only too conscious that I have neither the material nor the skill for presenting such a rare dish of entertainment as was served up for your delectation in January last. I will, however, with fear and trembling, venture on a few criticisms, before I come to the subject of my Paper.

The alleged cause of difference between us, as stated in the amusing narrative culled from the editorial columns of that juvenile thunderer, the SCHOOL GAZETTE, when stripped of the tremendous rhetoric of Mr. Quelch, must have been so insignificant that I had wholly forgotten it. Or it may be that something is due to the effacing hand of kindly remembrance. "Love covereth a multitude of sins." I cannot, therefore, speak to that which, even with the aid to my memory supplied by Mr. Cooke, I do not distinctly recollect.

We had our squabbles, no doubt. We were boys. It is not unlikely that I was as troublesome as Mr. Cooke or Mr. Quelch. In his closing remarks he unconsciously indicated where, as far as I can remember, the real difference which broke up our Society arose. The centre of the storm which so terribly shook our little world of amateur journalism was there. It was the astounding proposal that we should print the SCHOOL GAZETTE,

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and that we should buy the type and outfit, and do the printing. That was the beginning of our troubles; it was "the little rift" that widened in the editorial lute. I had the audacity to oppose my youthful judgment to the wisdom of my seniors, on the ground that we had not the capital with which to embark on so colossal and perilous an enterprise. I know it was very unheroic to be influenced by such low considerations. Why, indeed, should the noble effort to enlighten the understandings of the small boys of Bruce's School have been hampered by such vile oppositions as questions of ways and means? Yet so it was. There came call after call on our slender resources, and yet there was not enough with which to meet the all-devouring demand. Imagination and Mr. Cooke must supply the rest. As Mr. Cooke, now a sadder and a wiser man, pathetically said last year, "The financial difficulties proved too great to be overcome, and so the proposal to bring out the paper like the *Northern Daily Express*, in all the glory of real type, was prudently abandoned; for not even a journal so ably edited as the SCHOOL GAZETTE was by my late colleagues could have been floated on printers' ink—I apologise for the metaphor—without the material and miserable assistance of pounds, shillings, and pence.

I must, however, correct the impression that the attempt failed. It did not fail—altogether. For, to quote Mr. Cooke's words, "We did succeed in getting the title of the paper printed from type." Wonderful! I can forgive this modest cackle. My friends were naturally elated at their brilliant achievement in getting the *title* of their paper into type.

I have not, like Mr. Cooke, preserved copies of the SCHOOL GAZETTE. I do, however, remember the profound impression produced on my mind by his reading of the opening chapters of his thrilling serial story, "The Brigand Chief." As far as I

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know, there are no copies of the *Academic Times* in existence, nor do I recollect anything that ever appeared in it. My friend Dr. Clark Newton was associated with me in its production. Two or three facts may perhaps be worth mentioning respecting this poor, despised rival to the SCHOOL GAZETTE. It came out once a week. The SCHOOL GAZETTE was only a fortnightly. The SCHOOL GAZETTE was a penny paper, whereas the *Academic Times* was published at a halfpenny. My friend Mr. Archibald Reed has hazarded the belief that it was the first halfpenny paper ever published in this country, or in the world. And, lastly, it remained in possession of the field—alone and melancholy—several weeks after the SCHOOL GAZETTE had retired from the contest.

I will only add that whatever abuse we hurled at each other must have been taken in a "Pickwickian sense," for it did not seem to have seriously disturbed our friendship. Mr. Cooke and I corresponded after we left school. One letter, which he wrote to me five years after these events, I valued so much that I have preserved it to this day.

And now we come to the story of the election, which took place in the August of this eventful year—1857. It thus came off shortly before the events just referred to. Fortunately for my purpose, I have preserved notes of this great political battle, and, excepting in one or two matters, have no need to rely upon my memory. I am also indebted to extracts from the minute-book of the "Youths' Debating Society," which have been kindly supplied to me by Mr. Cooke, who obtained them through the Secretary, Mr. John Treeve Edgcome. This Society used to meet every Saturday morning in Mr. Shand's room, for the discussion of such questions as are usually propounded for the development of the budding talents of Mutual Improvement Classes. At one of those



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meetings it was proposed by Mr. John Hope that we should have a "Mock Election," as it was called. Those were the great days of the Ridley and Headlam contests; the election fever was in the air, and the suggestion was enthusiastically adopted. It was decided that there should be two Liberals and two Conservatives, and that Mr. Cooke should be the Sheriff and Returning Officer. Lots were cast, and the chosen candidates were Mr. John Bewick Quelch, Mr. John Hope, Mr. John Watson, and the writer of this paper. We were called upon there and then to choose our political colours. Imagine it! However, we had no more difficulty in doing so than children have in choosing sides, when playing at oranges and lemons. We declared ourselves with a cheerful readiness that would have satisfied the most exigent caucus in the country. On the question being put, our convictions sprang into full-fledged existence, like Minerva from the brain of Jupiter. Mr. Hope and Mr. Watson adopted the popular favour, which in those days was undoubtedly Liberal. Mr. Quelch and I resolved to make a stern fight for the good old Conservative cause. I must say here that my colleague subsequently modified his position considerably.

Such was the gratifying result of this snap-shot kind of interrogation by each one of his own political consciousness. I cannot tell what possessed me, at that time, to choose Conservative politics. I had been brought up as a sort of junior member of the great Liberal Party. I was, so to speak, suckled on the theory of Whig righteousness. I was accustomed to hear the Tories laughed at and reviled on every hand. It was scarcely safe to walk through the streets at election times wearing the Tory colours. Yet, with an unaccountable perversity, and without giving a moment's consideration to this great constitutional question, I selected the

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'True Blue'<sup>1</sup> favour for our mimic contest. By what mental process—rapid or otherwise—the other candidates solved or "jumped" the political problem, of course I could not say. Very likely it was a more intelligent decision than mine. Or it may be that the philosophy of our schoolboy politics could have been summed up in the words of the classical song—viz, "Every little boy born into this world is either a little Liberal or a little Conservative."

An unexpected difficulty now presented itself—at least it did to me. To choose a side, and to be able to advocate it, are two very different things. I immediately discovered my utter destitution of political knowledge. In my despair I turned to my father, who was one of the most active Liberals in Newcastle. He seemed amused at my having chosen the Tory side, but, with a mental detachment for which I was truly grateful, made me a present of a few arguments—not very damaging to my opponents, I admit—and equipped with these and with some printed paternal posters which had been intended for service in municipal contests, and bore the legend, "Vote for Hunter," and also with some homely rhetorical weapons of my own construction, I went forth to the great encounter.

There was an understanding at the meeting of the Debating Class, to which I have referred, that the canvass should not begin until the following Monday morning, and that then—to change the figure—all the candidates should toe the line and start fair. But, alas! for poor human nature, the temptation to steal a march on the others proved, in one instance, too great to be resisted, and when Messrs. Quelch, Hope, and Hunter came down on the Monday morning to ask the free and independent

<sup>1</sup> George Ridley, the Tory candidate referred to by Mr. Hunter, sported "Red" for his.—A. R.



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electors of Brucetown-on-Tyne to give them their intelligent suffrages, they found, to their dismay, that Mr. Watson (had he forgotten the agreement?) had been very active at the school on the Sunday, and, whilst we poor, unsuspecting innocents were otherwise engaged, had captured the entire boarder vote. Now, roughly speaking, there were 180 or 200 boys in the school, and to secure 40 votes to begin with—as will be seen in a moment—was a very serious matter for the other candidates. The indignation of the three, who had kept the compact, found fit and prompt expression, but we could do nothing. The boarder-vote had been promised. To Mr. Watson it would be given, and we had to make the best of it. We lost no time, but at once turned our attention, and our hopes, to the 140 unpledged and uncontaminated day-scholars.

Now to understand the situation at that critical moment in our political fortunes it must be remembered that between the day-scholars and boarders there was—especially in the games and sports of the school—a keen rivalry. Here was something for us to work on. Here was a good election cry. Mr. Watson represented the boarders. The boarders were going to vote for him; he was their man. Down with Watson! Thus in getting the boarders' votes in advance Mr. Watson had only succeeded so far. In fact, he had clearly overreached himself. But alas! as misfortune would have it, half of the promises obtained by us were never recorded, and help came to the enterprising Mr. Watson in another way, and, so far as I know, without his seeking it. The masters decided that the election should take place, not on a working-day, but on Saturday, which, so far as attendance at school was concerned, was an optional day. This was another disappointment, for, as we knew, probably not more than half of the day-scholars would be present. Our prospects looked less rosy. We resisted, but had to submit.

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There was another extraordinary feature in the election which possibly had something to do with the final result. There had to be no split votes; they had all to be plumpers. Such a thing, therefore, as a coalition, in the ordinary sense, between a pair of candidates was impossible. In fact, under such conditions the appearance of another candidate, on the same side, was really a more undesirable and dangerous factor in political warfare than that of one on the opposite side, because his candidature divided the Party. The friendship, therefore, of the two Liberals for each other, and of the two Tories for one another was—under these peculiar and very trying circumstances—of a most noble and disinterested character.

Of course all this rests on the agreeable assumption that all the scholars voted on a definite political conviction, which—I regret to admit—was more than doubtful.

The canvass proceeded vigorously, the candidates greatly increased their knowledge of the junior boys, and they of us; and before the end of the week every boy in the famous Percy Street Academy had been induced, by some means or other, to promise his vote.

It was agreed that the nomination of the four candidates should take place on Friday afternoon, the 21st, at five o'clock. Accordingly, hustings were erected in the high yard, in the good old English fashion, which obtained before these new-fangled American reforms came into operation. Dr. and Mrs. Bruce and all the teachers honoured the occasion by their presence. The proceedings were opened by a speech from the Sheriff, who concluded by calling on any gentleman to nominate a candidate.

Thereupon Mr. William Quelch proposed, and Mr. Henry Reid seconded, Mr. John Hope, as a fit and proper person to represent the town in Parliament. Mr. Robert Newton pro-

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posed, and Mr. Henzell seconded, Mr. Ralph Hunter. Mr. John Edgcome proposed, and Mr. John Black seconded, Mr. John Bewick Quelch. Mr. Dickinson proposed, and Mr. Robertson seconded, Mr. John Watson.

By far the ablest speech on the occasion was given by Mr. Quelch. He was the oldest of the four, and was older than his years. He seemed to have acquired a good deal of political knowledge. There was one paradoxical passage in his speech, with which, as I see from my notes, I agreed. He argued against the introduction of the Maine Liquor Laws into this country, on the ground that it would not be in the interests of temperance. Mr. Hope was not so fluent, but I am sure his remarks would be sensible and practical. Mr. Watson did not say much. He was a man of action, rather than of words. I find, on reference, that my speech commenced with an outrageously severe attack on Mr. Watson for his tactics during the election. I then took, as a peg on which to hang my remarks, the definition of the word "Conservative" from Walker's *Dictionary*. The great lexicographer of those days defined it as "having the power of opposing injury." I will give two, just two, choice specimens of fourteen-year-old school-boy political rhetoric. Fortified by Walker, I boldly asked the questions:—

"Who protect our FREE institutions—but Conservatives?"

"Who raised all the horrors of the French Revolution—but Radicals?" I concluded by urging the electors to return Mr. Quelch and myself, as if the fate of the British Empire depended on their response to my appeal.

I do not recollect, but of course a show of hands would be taken and a poll demanded on behalf of the two candidates who stood lowest in popular favour. And so the fateful day came—Saturday, August the 22nd. The long writing-room was

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used as a polling-booth. The polling commenced at eleven and ended at noon. The boys were admitted one by one, and gave their votes in open *viva voce* style. The votes were recorded as quickly as given, and totalled up. The door was thrown open and the room instantly filled. The result was announced, and received with deafening cheers.

Watson (Liberal)	.	.	.	46
Hunter (Conservative)	.	.	.	42
Quelch (Conservative)	.	.	.	16
Hope (Liberal)	.	.	.	15

Our friend Mr. John Watson had therefore the honour of being placed at the head of the poll, and he and Ralph Hunter were declared by Mr. Cooke, the Returning Officer, to have been duly elected. In great excitement we marched to the high yard and took our place on the hustings, each candidate with his chief supporters around him. The candidates, successful and unsuccessful, then thanked those who had so patriotically voted for them. The Sheriff was also thanked for the "able and impartial manner in which he had conducted the election." So far as my own position at the end of the fight was concerned, I owed it chiefly to the strenuous exertions of my trusty friends Mr. Andrew Browning and Mr. Robert Clark Newton, and if their zeal was somewhat importunate at times, I had no reason to complain. I must apologise for all this egotism, but I have no record of the other speeches, and will just add that when thanking the electors I felt it to be my painful duty to tell Mr. Quelch that he had not stuck to his colours as a Conservative, and that, perhaps, he had lost the election in consequence. Miniature guns were then fired, and the successful candidates carried shoulder high through the yards.

Such is the story of the famous election of 1857, as far as I

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am able to give it. I need not say that whatever I have set down in this Paper has been set down in good faith, and with good feeling towards all with whom I may have crossed swords in the days of long ago. Peace to memories of the past. The fights of our boyhood are over, and all who live to tell how they were fought are friends.

And now, in concluding, let me say how glad I am, after several disappointments, to be with you to-night. It is a new and most pleasant sensation—after forty-three years—to be amongst my old schoolfellows again—to return, in memory and feeling, to the days which we associate with the revered and beloved name of Dr. Bruce. There was in him that unmistakable mark of a sincere and noble piety, to which we do homage in the thoughts which lie deepest in us all. I will also add the much-respected name of Mr. Robertson. It is something, too, in this world of change, to have by my side two co-editors of the old SCHOOL GAZETTE—Mr. W. H. Cooke and Dr. J. Gordon Black—and to know that all four are living, for our good comrade Mr. Quelch has only sailed

“Beyond the sunset, and the baths  
Of all the western stars.”

The presence, too, at this table, of my old friend and co-editor of the *Academic Times*, Dr. Clark Newton, serves still further to connect and complete our journalistic and political experiences. Others there are here whom I am also delighted to see once more, and if I may mention one—and with his name I will bring these interminable remarks to a close—I feel that we are all honoured by the presence in the chair of another contemporary of my own—I mention the name of that distinguished man of letters, Sir Wemyss Reid.

Colonel A. S. PALMER (Vice-Chairman) gave the

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toast of "The Mayor and Corporation of Newcastle," saying he supposed it was usual first to tell of their faults and then to say something "pretty" about them to finish with, or we might have cause to regret it before many months were over. The object of the toast was to enable a compliment to be paid to the Sheriff (Mr. Oubridge), who was present, and was another old Percy Street boy who had taken civic honours. ♠

Mr. OUBRIDGE (the Sheriff) briefly responded, and, like many more, now wishes that he had given more time to his studies while at the old School and less to play; but, after all, probably he is the happiest man who would live his life over again absolutely in the same way.

Sir GEORGE BARCLAY BRUCE submitted the toast of "The Chairman." He was the only one present, he said, who dated back as having left the school in the 'thirties. Their esteemed Chairman was born some years after he was articled as a pupil to Robert Stephenson, and the fact made him feel more ancient than he really was. (Laughter.) It was certainly a very pleasant experience for him to be present that night. Looking back to the times when he was a boy at school, there had been a sort of kindly, generous feeling through his soul. It was sixty-six years since he left Percy Street. They had no election in those days, but they had a Reform Bill. They wanted the allowance of holidays increased to compensate for hard work. (Laughter.) Referring to former students at



COLONEL ALFRED S. PALMER, V.D.





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the School, Sir George mentioned Robert Stephenson, whom he described as a man of noble mind, fine spirit, and kindly heart. He knew him because he was in his service for a good many years, both at Berwick building the Tweed Bridge and at other places. Dr. Richardson (the celebrated chemist), Sir Lowthian Bell, and Sir Charles Mark Palmer he also remembered as students. He did not believe there could be a better technical school than Percy Street was in the old days when he was a boy. Their Chairman that evening, Sir George concluded, was one of the noblest men who had gone out from Percy Street. (Applause.)

The toast was heartily honoured.

Sir WEMYSS REID, in responding for the toast of his health, thanked them heartily for the kind reception they had given him, and expressed his great pleasure at being present on that occasion. He had long wanted to see once more the friends and comrades of his school-days, whose faces had been hidden from him by the mists of fifty years, and he was grateful to them for the honour they had done him in asking him to preside over that gathering. He had not, however, come there to talk about himself. He had been given to understand that what would please them best would be some of his own reminiscences of the School in his own time there, and he would do his best to gratify them. He did not suppose that there was any one there who had a clearer recollection than he had of the rambling old building in Percy Street. It was all

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plain to his eyes as he spoke ;—the long range of buildings, the three playing-yards: the upper, the middle, and the lower, and the shed in which they took shelter when it rained, or to which they resorted when they had a little difference to settle, and wished to settle it in the recognised school-boy fashion. In his later life he had heard himself described more than once as a very pugnacious fellow, but that was certainly not his character when he was at Percy Street Academy. As a matter of fact, he had only one stand-up fight during the whole of his school-days, and that was with his friend, whom he saw sitting near him, Mr. George Bell. He had no idea as to what they quarrelled about, and he had but a dim idea as to who was the conqueror, though he believed that he was. What he did remember was that, the fight being over, as he and his antagonist were washing their bloody little noses at the tap in the lavatory, they turned, and, by a mutual impulse, shook hands with each other; and from that moment to the end of their school-days they remained fast friends. This, he thought, was to the credit of both of them. Among the many reminiscences that crowded upon him as he thought of those days, there were none more vivid than those connected with the annual examinations at Midsummer. He could still see the big room, divided into two portions by the platform on which the boys went through their performances under the skilful hands of the Doctor. He could still recall the sweet odour of flowers which filled the

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apartment. He remembered that wonderful gallery at one side of the platform in which the boys were seated on tiers that rose to the very ceiling. He wondered what the air was like that those at the top had to breathe. Then, on the other side of the platform was the crowd of gaily-dressed ladies, the mothers and sisters of the boys. They were too young to have wives, and possibly even too young to have sweet-hearts, in those happy, far-off, and innocent days. One of the features of these annual examinations was the school Play, and the remembrance of the Play reminded him of one of his oldest and most distinguished school-fellows, whose name had perhaps not received all the credit due to it in connection with Percy Street Academy. This was John Moffat. When he, the speaker, was first at school, John Moffat was the biggest and oldest boy there; but in spite of his superior size and age he showed great kindness to him, and was more than once a guest at his father's house. John Moffat was the son of that grand old missionary, Robert Moffat, whose adventures with lions had endeared him to every school-boy; and he was the brother-in-law of David Livingstone, perhaps the greatest of all British travellers and explorers. One year, as he well remembered, the school-play represented a scene in South Africa. The first scene showed one of the boys, Wolfe Hay, if he remembered rightly, in the uniform of an English officer, lying wounded on the ground. He had been treacherously

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assailed and maltreated by a party of Boers; and at Percy Street, more than half a century since, they had learned to dislike the Boers quite as much as later generations had done. Suddenly, a horde of savage Kaffirs burst upon the scene with uplifted assegais, and with fierce cries threatened to put an end to poor Wolfe Hay upon the spot. But, at the critical moment, John Moffat appeared upon the scene, and standing between Wolfe Hay and the Kaffirs, protected him at the risk of his own life; and then, by means of his eloquence, he succeeded in soothing the savages, and finally convinced them that the Englishman was their friend. So the play ended in peace and reconciliation. There was something both prophetic and pathetic in that mimic school-boy drama of fifty years ago, for in later life Wolfe Hay actually wore the Queen's uniform, and fought and bled in Africa; whilst, as for John Moffat, he was destined to play a great part in conciliating the natives in the same country. To him more than to any other man we owe it that the native tribes in that vast country over which we now rule supreme had been reconciled to English supremacy. For many years he held the official position of protector of the natives, and he did such good work in that capacity that we owed more to him than to anybody else for the fact that we now held South Africa in security. Doctor Bruce's School had never sent out a boy who was destined to do more for England than John Moffat. The last time he, the speaker, met Mr. Moffat was a few years ago



SIR WEMYSS REID, LL.D.



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at the Reform Club. He found his old friend in a very happy frame of mind, and the reason was not far to seek. He had just received the honour of C.M.G. from the Queen, and by a happy, and perhaps unprecedented, coincidence, Mr. Moffat's own son had received the same honour at the same time. He thought they ought to be proud of having sent such a man out from Percy Street. Among the special incidents of his own school-life he remembered the entertainments which were given to the boys by Doctor Bruce; first, when the eminent man who sat on his right hand, and who had proved by his career that the race of great judges Newcastle had produced did not end with Eldon and Stowell—he referred, of course, to Sir Gainsford Bruce—came of age; and the second was when the University of Glasgow conferred upon their old master the degree of LL.D. What, to his boyish ideas, seemed to be sumptuous entertainments were given on both occasions. They had a ventriloquist, if he remembered rightly, in one of the class-rooms, and microscopes in the back-parlour. Perhaps he ought to apologise for mentioning the latter apartment, of evil omen; but let others wince, *his* withers were unwrung. That which he remembered best, however, in connection with these entertainments were the suppers. Even now he could conjure up a vivid recollection of the good things provided for them, and he knew that as he went home on those memorable evenings, doubtless surreptitiously loosening a button

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of his waistcoat, he was able to say with all his heart, "Fate cannot harm me: I have dined to-day." Another special recollection was of a lecture which Sir Gainsford Bruce delivered to them on the Battle of Waterloo. It was a clear and most interesting account of that greatest of all modern battles; and by some strange trick of the memory, he, the speaker, was able to recall the very words with which Sir Gainsford concluded his lecture. They were these: "It was the end of a glorious war, and the beginning of a still more glorious peace." Sir Gainsford had doubtless forgotten those words, but there they had remained hidden away for more than half a century in some nook in his, the speaker's, brain, waiting to be brought forth upon this occasion. That fact proved how retentive a boy's memory was, and how careful every man should be to sow nothing but good seed in such virgin soil. He would like to say something, however briefly, about the Friday afternoon addresses which Dr. Bruce was in the habit of delivering in the writing-room. Could they not all see the tall, spare figure of the Doctor as he walked up the room with his Bible under his arm, and a look of more than common seriousness upon his face? Those addresses were not sermons. In his opinion they were something very much better. They were simple talks with the boys, founded sometimes upon a passage in the Scriptures, sometimes upon some event that had just stirred the public mind, and often upon the duties of everyday life. But always they were addresses that strove to lift



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their school-boy hearts to a higher plane of thought than that of ordinary school life. The Doctor strove to make them honourable and manly, with a full sense of their responsibilities and duties, and a true insight into those laws of life which make for an honourable and useful manhood. Once, he remembered, that he committed what, from the school-boy's point of view, was the unpardonable sin of crying during one of these addresses. He had just lost his earliest play-fellow and friend, who was his school-fellow also, Thomas Hogg, a boy of thirteen. His heart was full of this, his first bereavement, and suddenly, whilst he was listening to the Doctor, he heard him refer to Tom Hogg; and his words were so full of gentle sympathy that he could not keep back the rush of unbidden tears to his eyes. He was sure that, as they looked back, they must all feel what a good thing it was that they had such a schoolmaster as this in their most impressionable years. Years after he had left school, when he was living in Leeds, he saw that Dr. Bruce was announced to preach in the Presbyterian Church there on a certain Sunday evening. He need not tell them that he went to hear his old schoolmaster; and, in doing so, he was vividly reminded of the Friday afternoons in Percy Street. At the close of the service he went up to the Doctor, who received him kindly, making many inquiries after his welfare; and then he (the speaker) took his courage in both hands, and told Dr. Bruce how the memory of those weekly addresses had remained with him ever since he had

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left school, and he thanked him for all the good he had done to those who had been entrusted to his care. It was the last time that he ever spoke to him. There were two memorable days that he recalled in connection with his school-life which he would like to mention to them. The first was that dark day in October, 1854, when what was known as long as he remained in Newcastle as "The Great Fire" took place. A great fire it undoubtedly was, and it caused a lamentable loss of life. He remembered being awakened by the noise of the explosion when the bonded warehouses in Gateshead were blown up, and destruction carried far and wide on both sides of the river. Those were the days of the Crimean War, and he remembered that when he was awakened by the terrific boom of the explosion he was dreaming that the Russians were coming up the river and bombarding Newcastle. It was in the depths of the October night when the explosion took place, but when he and his brother looked out of their bedroom window they saw the whole sky illuminated by the glare of the flames. An hour later he was standing on the High Level Bridge, holding his father's hand, and looking down upon a scene the like of which he had never beheld before or since, and which he hoped he would never behold again. It was indeed an awful sight! On the right, where a few hours before the bonded warehouses of Gateshead had stood, there was now something that looked like the crater of a vast volcano, the glow of which was

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reflected on the grey walls of the old Parish Church. In front, the river shone scarlet, like a lake of blood, and three ships were burning on its bosom. To the left, on the old Quayside of Newcastle, with its network of narrow chares and alleys, he and his brother counted no fewer than seven distinct fires raging at once. It was on that tragical morning that he witnessed a sight which a boy can never forget—the first sight he had ever had of a man who had met a violent death. It was one of the poor victims of the explosion, whom they were lifting into a cart on the Sandhill. Well, on that terrible morning he went to school at the usual hour, though he felt little inclination for it. There was a very thin attendance of boys, and before school began they gathered round him and one or two others who, like him, had seen something of the fire, eager to learn as much as they could of the dreadful details. He remembered that they all spoke in whispers, for all were overawed by the calamity which had suddenly befallen their native town. His first class that morning was in the Latin-room, and here he found Mr. Garven, the “Betty” of their schooldays, sitting at his desk. His eyes were full of tears, and that little cane of his, which he used to swing in his hand, and which was so short that it would hardly have hurt a fly, was lying idly on his desk. He, too, spoke in whispers, and seemed unable to raise his voice, even when the stupidest boy in the class made the worst of all possible blunders. But suddenly they were aware of the

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presence of the Doctor, who had entered the room silently, and was standing beside Mr. Garven's desk. "Boys," he said, in grave tones, "you all know of the terrible calamity that has befallen our good old town. There has been immense destruction of property, and, what is worse, an awful loss of life. The father of one of you boys has been killed. There can be no school to-day. You must go home; but go quietly, and think of those who are in sorrow and suffering because of last night's dreadful work." They went quietly, as they were told to do, and for once in their lives felt almost sorry to have an unexpected holiday. Was not that, he asked, a wise act on the part of their old master? He knew then, he knew always, that the Latin Grammar and the first three books of Euclid were not enough of themselves to fill a boy's heart or satisfy his aspirations. He knew that boys, like older people, could be touched and moved by the great events which affected the community or the nation to which they belonged. He recognised the fact that they could have had no heart for their tasks on that melancholy day, and so he treated them, not as mere school-boys, but as men, knowing full well that in doing so he was allowing that great catastrophe to impress them far more deeply than it would have done if they had been compelled to go through the weary routine of their school labours. Surely this incident alone would prove Dr. Bruce's superiority to the average schoolmaster of his time.

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The other day of which he wished to speak came soon afterwards, and it seemed to him that it taught the same lesson. One Friday morning they were unexpectedly summoned to the writing-room, not knowing the reason for the summons. When the Doctor came in he had, not his Bible, but a newspaper under his arm. "Boys," he said when he reached the desk, "I have brought you together in order that I may read to you the story of the great deeds that have been done for England by our fellow-countrymen in a distant land. I am going to read the story of the Battle of Inkerman, as it is told by the special correspondent of the *Times* in yesterday's copy of that journal." And then he read to them Dr. Howard Russell's wonderfully vivid and eloquent account of that great battle. At first he checked peremptorily any attempt of the boys to applaud, but when he came to a passage in which Russell described the Russians as having advanced "howling like demons," the young blood before him could not be denied, and they all burst into a mighty cheer of defiance. "Now, boys," said the Doctor, with a laugh, "don't you do the same." But after that they were allowed to cheer to their hearts' content, and did so. He did not believe that any boy who was present in the writing-room on that morning, nearly fifty years ago, could have forgotten the story of the Battle of Inkerman as it fell from their dear old master's lips. Here, surely, was another instance which showed his superiority to the ordinary schoolmaster, and his desire

## Bruce's School

to interest his pupils in the affairs of that great outside world in which, as he knew full well, they would all soon have to play their parts. It was his constant desire to lift them out of the mere school-boy rut, and to open their minds to other things besides syntax and arithmetic. In all this he proved himself to be what he was, a model guide and instructor of youth. Continuing, Sir Wemyss Reid said: "I can well remember the day on which I first heard the name of Mr., not then Dr., Bruce. It was in the year 1848 or 1849. My father, as some of you are aware, was for fifty years a minister of religion in this town. He was one of the gentlest and noblest of men, one whom I have never ceased to revere as the very pattern and exemplar of a Christian gentleman. But those who choose to serve God rather than Mammon in this life cannot expect to gain riches as their reward, and my father was a very poor man. But despite his poverty, he was resolved that his sons should have the best education that he could procure for them. That meant that they must be sent to the best school in Newcastle, Percy Street Academy. So, when my elder brother, who has been in his grave these twenty years and more, was of school age, he took him to Mr. Bruce to enter him as his pupil. I have no doubt that he went with some trepidation, knowing full well that the school-fees would be a heavy tax upon his small income. I was sitting with my mother in the drawing-room at home in Summerhill Terrace when my father returned, and I saw that there

## Seventh Annual Dinner

was an unwonted brightness on his gentle face. He told my mother how Mr. Bruce, after examining my brother, had pronounced him to be fully qualified to enter the school; and then my father asked what the fees were. The answer he received was, 'My dear Mr. Reid, I never take a fee from a minister of religion.' And so it came to pass that not only my brother, but myself and my two younger brothers, were educated at Percy Street without any fee being paid on our behalf. Perhaps I ought to apologise for mentioning anything of this private nature; but I could not have come to this dinner, I could not have made this speech, without telling you this story, which throws, I think, a still nobler light upon Dr. Bruce's character than that which has been thrown by anything else that has been said to-night. You will not wonder, after hearing this tale, that I cherish his memory with unstinted gratitude and reverence. He was a good man, as well as a good schoolmaster, and it was a privilege for all of us, my old friends and comrades, to be associated with him in our early days, and to receive from him, not merely a technical education, but those lessons which were calculated to make us in after-days useful and honourable citizens. The best wish I can utter for each one of us is that we may continue to cherish his memory, his example, and his influence to the last day of our lives."

Mr. EDWARD CLARK, by request, here sang the following song:—

## BRUCE'S OLD BOYS.

*Air*—"Long, long ago."

Broken is the dear old school,  
Long, long ago !  
Broken now the Doctor's rule,  
Long, long ago !  
Its scholars now are scatter'd wide,  
Tossed upon Life's stormy tide—  
Time and fate did them divide ;  
Long, long ago ! long ago !!

Gone the rooms we knew so well,  
Long, long ago !  
Silent now the old school-bell,  
Long, long ago !  
Though Brewery now has swallowed all,  
Still you'll find against the wall,  
A stately<sup>1</sup> figure to recall,  
The long, long ago ! long ago !!

Not always work, but sometimes play,  
Long, long ago !  
The scholars held beneath its sway,  
Long, long ago !  
Twice a year with ardour bright,  
Together, as we've done to-night,  
We sang a song with all our might,  
Long, long ago ! long ago !!

<sup>1</sup> This effigy was the gift of Mr. W. J. Sanderson. The sculptor's work was executed by Mr. Ralph Hedley, and the unveiling ceremony was performed by Mr. Justice Bruce.



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Rare the games we once played there ;

Long, long ago !

“ Prisoners’ Bays” and “ Hunt the Hare,”

Long, long ago !

Then when we went home at nights,

Think of all the splendid fights,

We had with hated Snapeyites !

Long, long ago ! long ago !!

Of all the Teachers on our list,

Long, long ago !

The sole survivor now is “ Whist,”

From long, long ago !

But there’s one of humble fame,

To omit would be a shame,

“ Betty ” Garven was his name ;

Long, long ago ! long ago !!

Our Tom, who’s in the chair to-night,

From long, long ago !

Has now become a worthy Knight,

Long, long ago !

Since old days he’s written reams,

But there’s one slight change, it seems,

Instead of “ Tom,” he’s now “ Sir Wemyss !”

Long, long ago ! long ago !!

## Bruce's School

Some are round me now as then,  
Long, long ago !  
Some have gone beyond our ken,  
Long, long ago !  
Some are under distant skies,  
More than one now silent lies,  
Ah ! the thoughts that sadly rise,  
Of long, long ago ! long ago !!

Courage, boys ! 'Twas "Onward" then,  
Long, long ago !  
Comrades ! we're still "Onward" men,  
From long, long ago !  
The dear old School's departed shade,  
From our memories ne'er shall fade,  
Nor the friendships that we made  
Long, long ago ! long ago !!

—E. T. NISBET.

Mr. GEORGE BELL made some very interesting references to his old school-days in proposing "Our Next Merry Meeting." He remembered "Tom" Reid tapping his claret in the early days referred to by Sir Wemyss, and spoke most feelingly of their sincere friendship later in life. Mr. Bell said in May 1900 he was in Cape Town, and there met a young man named Moffat. In conversation he found he was a son of his old school-fellow, John S. Moffat (mentioned earlier by Mr. John B. Simpson), and, to his extreme delight, learned he

## Seventh Annual Dinner

was about to meet his father; so an opportunity like this was not to be lost, and George Bell and John Moffat, Old Boys of the 'fifties, met after forty-eight years. Moffat's flowing beard of grey gave him quite a patriarchal appearance; and, needless to say, in a very short time these two Old Boys were in a well-known café in Adderley Street, and soon deep in conversation of old times. Mr. Bell particularly mentioned their affectionate regard for our beloved Doctor, Mr. Garven, and other masters. Mr. Moffat asked also after Sir Gainsford Bruce, Professor Annandale, Sir George Hare Philipson, and many others too numerous to mention, and their conversation stirred up memories of the past most dear to both of them. Moffat afterwards went down to the dock to see his old school-fellow sail in A.M.S. *Scot* for England. Mr. Moffat has spent his life in South Africa as a missionary, and now is a Civil Governor. After these interesting remarks Mr. Bell fell back on his toast, "Our Next Merry Meeting," and this toast had never been more pleasingly submitted.

"Auld Lang Syne" now claimed attention before our "Breaking-up."

# OLD BOYS

## WHO HAVE ATTENDED THE ANNUAL DINNERS.

Dr. Arnison	Dr. Geo. B. Craig (1854-63).
(since deceased).	Wm. Coulson (1854).
Prof. Annandale (1856).	Dr. J. Craig (1855-63).
Rob. S. Anderson (1872-79).	Wm. H. Crow (1855).
Dr. Jas. Aitchison.	James Cole (1857-60).
„ H. H. Aitchison.	W. E. Cowan (1860-64).
„ T. Aitchison.	Ed. Clark (1864).
Hon. Mr. Justice Bruce, Knt.,	C. J. Crawford (1864).
D.C.L. (1847).	Henry Cross (1866).
Sir G. Barclay Bruce (1836).	T. Chilton, jun.
Peter Brown (1844-50).	G. F. Charlton (1868).
Geo. Bell (1851-56).	L. Davidson.
Dr. John Gordon Black (1852-1858).	Wm. Dunn (1848-56).
C. R. Bell (1854).	W. Goode Davies (1853-58).
John S. Bertram (1856).	John Dent (1857-58).
H. O. Blenkinsop (1863-65).	Edwin Dodds (1865-66).
John Bruce (1864).	W. T. Dance (1864).
F. W. B. Bond (1868).	Thos. Eyton (1854-64).
J. G. Brewis (1872-77).	E. S. Edminson (1855-60).
F. J. Brown.	J. R. Fletcher (1860-65).
Alex. Bertram (1877).	James Ferguson (1865-72).
Thos. Charlton (1852-57).	E. W. Garbutt (1851).
W. H. Cooke, B.A. (1854-57),	J. H. Gibson (1860-68).
Barrister-at-Law.	Jas. B. Garland (1867-69).

# Old Boys

Rev. R. W. G. Hunter (1853-1859).

D. T. Hume (1859-61).

E. W. Jacob (1852-56),  
Gold Medallist at the Jubilee of  
the School.

T. Snowball-Innes (1861-66).

T. C. Marshall (1857).

G. T. Millican (1857)  
(since deceased).

Thomas Milburn (1866).

W. J. Magall (1872).

Dr. F. W. Newcombe (1854-1862).

Dr. Robt. Clark Newton  
(1856-60).

Ald. Dr. W. H. Newton (1856).

J. T. Nisbet (1856).

Wm. Lister Newcombe (1857-1863).

Ed. T. Nisbet (1861-66).

R. S. Nisbet (1860-65).

J. T. Oliver (1855-58).

J. M. Oubridge (1860).

G. W. Oubridge (1860-63).

Sir Geo. Hare Philipson (1844-1851).

Colonel Alfred S. Palmer (1844-1848).

Bryan J. Prockter (1851).

Joseph A. Philipson (1857).

Colonel Wm. B. Proctor  
(1865-70).

John Hy. Proctor (1876).

J. Cartmell Ridley (1851-54).  
Sir Wemyss Reid, LL.D.

(1852-54).

Archibald Reed (1852-58).

Stuart J. Reid (1856-63).

J. S. Rea (1857).

Jno. Hy. Rowell (1859-67).

Ed. H. Richardson (1862-65).

W. L. Rennoldson (1862).

J. W. Robinson (1862-65).

W. S. Robson, M.A., K.C.  
(1864), Recorder of Newcastle.

R. Rowley.

Captain Salmon  
(since deceased).

W. J. Scott (1844-47).

J. Bell Simpson (1851-53).

John Simpson (1854-61).

R. G. Salmon (1854-60).

W. F. Scheele (1857-60).

Walter C. Simpson (1862-66).

W. J. Sanderson (1863-68).

Jas. Sutherland (1859).

Geo. Smith (1868).

James Sambidge (1872-77).

J. David Scott (1842).

J. S. Smith.

J. W. Smith (1862)  
(since deceased).

M. Shivers (1857).

Rev. James B. Thorburn  
(1854).

# Bruce's School

W. C. Thomlinson (1857).

R. L. Telfer (1873-78).

Geo. Woodger (1862).

J. Straker Wilson (1847)

(since deceased).

T. Carrick Watson (1849-50).

R. Woodward (1854).

J. W. Wilkinson (1860).

Thos. Wood (1860).

Dr. Arthur Wear (1863).

Ralph Watson (1865-68).

Geo. Wilkinson (1864).

Geo. Ward.

Andrew Young (1850-58).

T. J. Young (1850-58).

Lindsay S. Young (1875).

## OLD BOYS

WHO HAVE SENT SYMPATHETIC LETTERS  
REGRETTING NOT BEING ABLE  
TO ATTEND.

Philip A. Berkley (1836).

Sir I. Lowthian Bell, Bart.  
(1827).

Septimus Cail (1834).

Joseph Dickinson (1833),  
South Bank, Pendleton.

Sir William Gray  
(since deceased).

Dr. Wm. King (1849)  
(since deceased).

Sir Charles M. Palmer, Bart.  
(1833).

Matthew Proctor (1830-37)  
(since deceased).

Dr. Thos. Pigg, M.D. (1834-  
1840)  
(since deceased).

Jas. Pigg (1838-42)  
(since deceased).

John Soulsby Rowell (1857-  
1860),  
H.B.M. Vice-Consul at Havre.

Major Benjn. J. Thompson  
(1828)  
(since deceased).

John Bruce

Rev Stephen M

George B. Bruce

Lowthian Bell

Chas. M. Palmer

Joseph Dickenson

Philip A. Berkley

Septimus A. Mail

J. Collingwood Bruce





Gainsford Bruce

John Bruce

Gilbert P. Robertson -

John Hare Phillips

Peter From

Asa Palma

William I Scott

Elo Garbutt

Wemyss Reid



Sham. Chumendale

Bryan J. Becker

Wm B. Simpson

Wm A. Phillips

Edw Black

W. H. Crow

W. H. Crow

Wm A. Phillips

Wm A. Phillips



Arch. Reed  
Andrew Young

R. W. G. Hunter

John Dent

Henry W. Newton

George Davis

A. G. Reed

J. B. Hockum

Henry

R. Woodward

---

Geo. J. Craig









Thomas J. Loring

W. J. Sanderson

W. E. Corran

J. S. Jones

Edward. Ward

W. H. Dance

Charles J. Lerauford

J. D. Hume

W. H. Smith

W. L. Renoldson

John H. Proctor

Geo. Polk



**A PEEP AT NEWCASTLE  
IN THE 'FIFTIES.**





HIGH LEVEL AND OLD TYNE BRIDGES, 1851.



## A PEEP AT NEWCASTLE IN THE 'FIFTIES.

It is not with a desire to write even a short History of Newcastle at the time when Bruce's School was at its height of fame that these lines are penned, but that the reader may be prevented from forming a wrong impression of Newcastle by associating in his mind's eye a part which did not then exist with the "canny toon" as it then really was. The population of the town in 1851 was 87,784, whereas in 1901 it was 214,803, a very considerable increase in fifty years, and one requiring correspondingly increased dwelling-house accommodation. Suppose we take a ramble around what I shall term inhabited Newcastle, because the actual boundaries embraced a larger circumference at the period we are considering. Commencing at the Shot Tower, in almost a direct line to the bottom of Rye Hill (which was then far from completed), looking westward along Scotswood Road, there were very few houses indeed beyond the Bath Hotel, and the writer walked by the hedgerows to Scotswood Bridge almost without interruption in the late 'fifties. It must not be forgotten

## A Peep at Newcastle

that Armstrong's Works were on quite a small scale at this time, and not adjacent to Scotswood Road, but on the south side of the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway; neither did they approach at all near to the riverside in those days. We will now in our imaginary ramble proceed up Rye Hill, not forgetting that westward all was open country. The "Parades" alone were in existence, but not completed. At the top of Rye Hill, about one hundred to one hundred and fifty yards westward, and facing down East Parade, stood an old-fashioned dwelling, with a huge tree growing in the middle of the path leading to the front door. The building was known as the Nursery Cottage. Mr. Handyside, a speculative builder, had just laid his plans for Bentinck Crescent, which, when finished, was considered a very "dandy" place indeed. All was open, and practically unbuilt upon, until Elswick Hall was reached—this being the residence of the late Mr. Christian Allhusen. It is now the Public Museum in Elswick Park, containing the Lough Models, etc. Passing on westward as far as Benwell Church, only one house was met with. This is at the top of Glue-house Lane, and was then occupied by a Mr. Hindhaugh. Next, and lastly, came High Cross House. What a comparison this is with to-day! At Benwell Church there were only a few white-washed typical pitmen's cottages, where now stands an entire township with possibly as many inhabitants as Newcastle contained, all told, in the 'fifties. I am reminded by an Old Bruce Boy that in 1853 or 1854 he



## in the 'Fifties

picked blackberries in their wild state where Elswick Cemetery now stands, and that all the surroundings were absolutely rural; so we may place on record that the roads of Scotswood and Elswick respectively were practically without house or habitation, and the remark applies to the ground between these parallels, as well as to that between Elswick Road and the main West Turnpike and Fenham. From Elswick Lane a clear view was obtainable of the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway (now North Eastern Railway), with the red engines and yellow carriages, each engine being named after a castle or place on the West Line, or other favoured appellation. The guards were very spruce with their scarlet frock-coats and silk chimney-pot hats. Our only other railway into Newcastle at that time was the York, Newcastle, and Berwick Railway, which amalgamated with the Leeds Northern and one or two others in the year 1854, and became the North Eastern. The reader must remember that we are still on our ramble, and only at the Nursery Cottage at the top of Rye Hill. Let us proceed up Elswick Row, which is a continuation of Rye Hill, a row of neat brick dwelling-houses terminating in Arthur's Hill, about a furlong above St. Paul's Congregational Church, where, in those days, the Rev. Alexander Reid (father of Sir Wemyss Reid) conducted the services. This church was originally Church of England before it was purchased by the Congregationalists. On the opposite side of the road, Westgate Cemetery meets the eye, and here, we are reminded,

## A Peep at Newcastle

John Bruce, the founder of Percy Street Academy, lies at rest. We must now take a bee-line to Todd's Nook, near the Barracks, remembering, as we go, that all westward is absolutely open and unbuilt on. What is to-day known as the Brighton Grove portion of Newcastle was all fields, nursery gardens, and open moor. With the exception of the Workhouse and three stone-built residences in their own grounds on the north side only of Arthur's Hill, there was nothing on the Elswick Road side. Arrived at the Barracks, we have The Leazes—the open Leazes—neither Park nor Infirmary interrupting the freedom of the citizen. The Park may be an improvement; the Infirmary decidedly is not, and should never have been placed here. Having crossed The Leazes, Reid's Brewery is our next halt, and many an Old Bruce Boy will call to mind skating on the Brewery Pond with Harry Reid and his brothers. Leaving Chimney Mills, we cross the southern end of the Town Moor, passing the old Water Ponds, which were formerly the town's supply, such as it was. There were four reservoirs, surrounded by a strong stone wall about four or five feet high, with a high hawthorn hedge on top. In winter these ponds were used by the public for skating, they having fallen into disuse as reservoirs; consequently the water left in was far from deep, and guaranteed perfect safety on immersion. Their exact location was in the Recreation Ground, and visitors to the Exhibition in 1887 will remember the place as being that where the "Old Tyne

## in the 'Fifties

Bridge" was erected. We must continue our "toddle" towards Jesmond Parish Church, which was built in 1857, as a memorial to the Rev. Richard Clayton (an Old Bruce Boy), formerly a beloved pastor of St. Thomas' Church, at the Barras Bridge. As we look around, we must not forget that, with the exception of Carlton Terrace (Jesmond Road) and part merely of the houses opposite and one side (west) of Victoria Square, the only other houses visible eastwards were a terrace of three houses and two villas known as Jesmond Villas (Windsor Crescent and surroundings not being known then); after which but two houses intervened between these villas and what is now known as the Armstrong Bridge, and both these were licensed for the sale of intoxicants. One was "The Minories," the other the "Cradle Well." From Clayton Memorial Church to Nater's Brewery is our next step. This direction, now known as Hutton Terrace, was in the old days by footpath across a field passing a small cottage, which in later years was used as a gardener's house by the Portland Bowling Green. We are now at "Lambert's Leap," and will rest a while to enter into the consideration of this beautiful spot and why it got its name. *Sykes*, vol. i. p. 225, says:—"As Mr. Cuthbert Lambert, son of an eminent physician residing in Pilgrim Street, was riding along Sandyford Stone Lane on the 20th September 1759, his mare took fright, and, running to the bridge, made a spring over the battlement, which was three and a half feet high, to the opposite side of the burn below, which was forty-

## A Peep at Newcastle

five feet, and was thirty-six feet perpendicular. What was very astonishing, and indeed remarkably providential, the young gentleman escaped with his life. An intervening branch of an old ash tree broke their fall. In consequence of Mr. Lambert having kept his seat to the bottom he received so violent a shock that he was some time indisposed. The mare stretched itself out and died almost immediately. Being a great favourite, its skin was preserved in the family. On examining the body, all the joints of the back were found displaced by the fall."

We will return to this place later on, when considering Newcastle in the 'fifties *beyond* the limits of our supposed ramble; and in the meantime proceed by a wide footpath with hedgerows and fields on either side almost in a direct line through what is now known as Chester Crescent to Franklin Street (the northerly part of Shield Street was not completed), and onward along this street to Shieldfield Green. Eastward you had Wesley Street and Carlton Street, and *nothing beyond*. Standing at Shieldfield Green, looking eastward, you had an uninterrupted view to the "Five Wand" Mill at Red Barns, and onward to Byker Hill. Christ Church was unknown then, likewise Copland Terrace and Simpson Terrace, and all intervening streets to the back of Ridley Villas. As we pass the Red Barns, let us mention that the only bridge to Byker was the railway viaduct. Proceeding to Crawhall's Ropery, we are practically at the end of our journey, except walk-

## in the 'Fifties

ing what may be termed the base line-diameter of our semicircle—as only the Cut Bank, Tyne Street, and Ballast Hills have been omitted as uninteresting. Proceeding from St. Ann's Church by the riverside to the Shot Tower, there is not much to record beyond the fact that the North Eastern Railway Company have in recent years, by an underground line, joined the Quayside with their system at Red Barns, for merchandise facilities that were very much required, and which, let us hope, will be very much increased by an enlarging of our Quay space. There is absolutely nothing to prevent our Newcastle Quay extending from Sandgate to the Sandhill, and goods being removed speedily to rail immediately on arrival. Docks were all very well fifty or sixty years ago, and had the Ouseburn been converted into a dock at that time, when Mr. George Tallentire Gibson advocated it, much of the import traffic which has been diverted from the Tyne would have been secured to us to-day. For some time a project has been under consideration to have a second High Level Bridge from the south end of Pilgrim Street to Gateshead. Should this ever be accomplished, it is most sincerely to be hoped the authorities will avoid the mistake made by the Byker Bridge Company, and make the work worthy of the object ; besides, they might also profit by remembering that when the present High Level Bridge was under consideration, the Railway Company (to keep down the expense) wanted it only two-thirds its present width, and that Robert Stephenson declined to take the re-

## A Peep at Newcastle

sponsibility of constructing such a bridge, well knowing the resistance that was required in a situation so open to the blasts and tempests we are accustomed to at certain periods, both from the east and west. So three lines of rails were laid on the High Level, and what would the Railway Company not give to-day had they embraced Stephenson's first idea of having four lines instead of the compromise of three? This extra widening of the bridge led to the idea of the underway for vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and but for the muddle in negotiations with the Railway Company the footpath would have been long since free to the public. It was generally understood it would be, after a proportion of the cost of construction had been defrayed, subject to some annual payment for up-keep, but it was many years after the bridge had been opened that the omission was discovered. In connection with a new High Level Bridge a lift should be provided by the municipal authorities or by a private company, and so put an end to the inhuman treatment of horses in Dean Street. Certainly it looks a large undertaking, but are we not to look ahead? and will not the venture pay well enough, and besides clear out all the old, contaminated property in the vicinity? Mr. Richard Grainger, seventy years ago, set Newcastle an example in looking ahead, when he built streets like Grey Street, Grainger Street, and Clayton Street. What has been done since? Every opportunity to run on similar lines neglected, until the main arteries are all gorged.

## in the 'Fifties

Old lanes such as High Bridge and the Pudding Chare are being rebuilt without any attempt to open up a parallel street to Grainger Street from Stephenson's Monument to the east end of the city.

Reverting to the Quayside, we have the same old method of discharging sailing vessels and weighing the grain as we had fifty years ago; but the small sea-going vessels are not now so numerous as then, when tiers of five and six vessels lay abreast, and the grain was carried by porter-pokemen over the several ships' decks by means of gangways and on into the lofts, in many cases six and seven storeys high. These small vessels were of 200 or 300 quarters, whereas at present we have steamers arriving with 13,000 quarters in one bottom.

The Guildhall now attracts our attention. The east end of this was used as a fish market, and between the fine Corinthian columns we had a peep at the Newcastle fish-wife, gaily dressed with her real "Indee-silk han'ketcher" over her shoulders, serving her "wares" from the leaden slabs, with a plentiful supply of water flowing down. It is not to be supposed for a moment that these "aborigines" could conduct their business without an occasional row, over the one decoying the other's customer or the like. They, however, terminated generally in an apologetic glass of rum at the "Golden Fleece" (O. C. H.) opposite, this old established "pub," kept by a Mr. Wylam, being noted for the quality of its rum and brown brandy (whisky

## A Peep at Newcastle

being then a stimulant of comparatively new introduction).

"But when maw lugs was 'lectrified wiv Judy Downey's deeth,  
Alang wi' Heufy Scott aw cried, till baith was out o' breeth;  
For great an' sma', fish-wives an' a', luik'd up tiv her with  
veneration—

If Judy's in the courts above, then for Awd Nick there'll  
be ne 'casion."

—W. OLIVER, 1829.

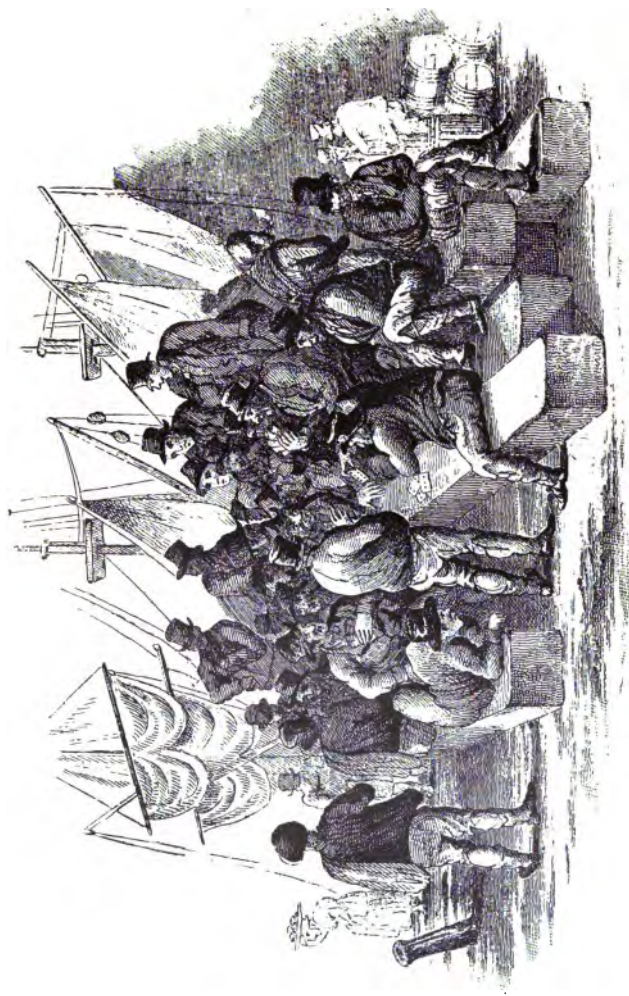
Is it a case of imitation being the sincerest form of flattery that causes twentieth-century colliery owners, steam-ship owners, and merchants, who congregate daily in the "Old Fish Market" (now known as the Newcastle Commercial Exchange and News Room), to cross over to the same "old pub" and settle their differences, or confirm contracts? Such is life! But where, oh, where is "Johnny the Pie-man"? who in the early 'fifties stood at the end of the entry, calling—

"Hot pie, toss or buy;  
Mutton pie, have a try."

Johnny, if shabby-genteel, was always clean and neat, with his high silk hat and dress suit, white bib and apron, and his block-tin oven shining like silver.

The Old Tyne Bridge next comes in view, with its "blue stone" in the middle—the only stone extending the full width of the footpath, by many supposed to mark the division between Northumberland and Durham; also





KEELMEN PLAYING AT CARDS.

Keelmen in the 'Forties and early 'Fifties were quaint characters, with their high beaver hats, locally called "men's hats."



## in the 'Fifties

the High Level Bridge, just completed, looking down upon the Old Bridge with an appearance of contempt, until at a later period the Armstrong Swing Bridge hurled back the look with scorn. Journeying along the Close we pass the old Mansion House, with its flat roof and carriage-drive in front. Once the pride of the town, it was regularly gaily decorated on ball-nights with thousands of small oil-lamps of variegated colours. An instance of this was in 1827, when the Duke of Wellington visited our canny town, and the Mayor entertained in the Mansion House 240 guests to dinner, with a ball to follow. According to *Sykes*, the Duke left the Mansion House at twelve o'clock for Ravensworth Castle, where he slept. The carriage was attended by twelve torch-bearers on horseback—six before and six behind. A very short distance from the Close concludes our walk, and brings us back to the Shot Tower, from which we started, having traversed a distance of as nearly as possible six miles.

Let us now glance at the interior of Newcastle in the 'fifties. The Cattle Market, opposite Marlborough Street in Scotswood Road, was not then made, and the site presented the appearance of an open clay-field with sand heaps, but just the place for travelling showmen and circus people to lay siege to; and similar unused ground was available for kindred purposes at the west end of the Central Station, where the Railway Audit Offices are to-day. Again, at the south

## A Peep at Newcastle

end of the Town Hall (opposite St. Nicholas' Church) we had a pandemonium on Saturday nights, only rivalled by the disgraceful state of Newcastle Quayside on a Sunday morning at the present time. The Town Hall had not been commenced until 1855, in which year the foundation-stone was laid by the Mayor of Newcastle, Mr. Isaac Lowthian Bell (now Sir Lowthian Bell, Bart.), and he, being an Old Bruce Boy, may probably take an interest in these pages. Possibly the worthy baronet may even at this distant date remember a circumstance connected with the laying of the stone, trifling as it was. The Mayor having declared the stone truly laid, was in the act of handing up his son to have the honour of being next on the stone after he left it, when his object was frustrated by the act of a boy about twelve, of the "onward" type, instantly leaping on and waving his cap. That boy was fortified with a "blue ticket," and was told it would entitle him to the most prominent place, and nearest the stone; so he apparently made full use of it, but now in these lines tenders a public apology for his waywardness. The stone is almost directly opposite the White Hart Inn. The Corn Market and Town Hall portions were alone proceeded with at that time, the north and south ends being left for future consideration.

The Central Railway Station was without a portico until far into the 'fifties. Grainger Street was only completed from Earl Grey's Monument to the top of the Bigg Market. West Grainger Street was in those

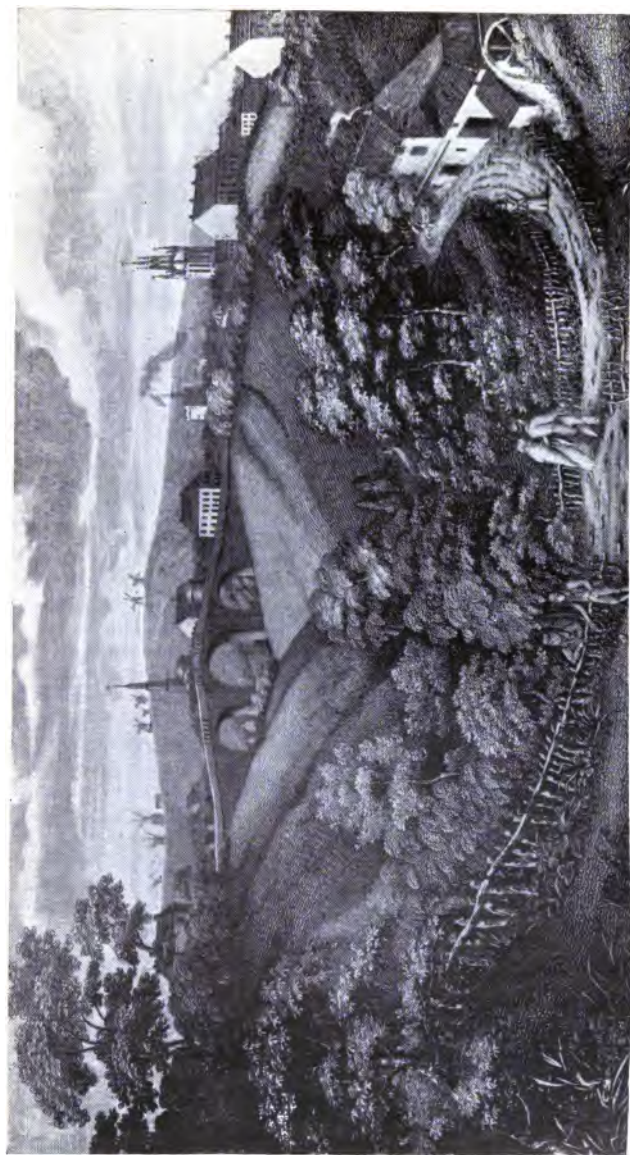
## in the 'Fifties

days a back street called St. John's Lane, and was entered at the east end under an archway (sufficient only to admit a cart). It had a row of neat, self-contained houses on the right as one approached St. John's Church, with warehouses opposite. It was pear-shaped, being twice the width at the low end, and the outlet was a narrow flagged path, with posts to prevent wheeled traffic, and was bordered by St. John's Church on the left and Newcastle Vicarage wall on the right as Westgate Street was entered. The Savings Bank and Dr. Gibb's house have since been built on the Vicarage gardens. Of course Burdon's Buildings and the County Hotel were not there, the hotel being in those days known as Young's Neville Hotel, opposite the Station.

The Post Office was situated in the Royal Arcade, and its business conducted in two large rooms, now in the occupation of the Incorporated Law Society. There were only two deliveries of letters each day, at 8.50 A.M. and 6.30 P.M. It is worth recording that in the early 'fifties the penny postage-stamp, although in use, was not imperatively insisted upon as now; but the public could use a "knocker" at a small window of about eighteen inches square, which opened into the Arcade, and then hand in the letter and the coin together. The clerk stamped the envelope with an official paid impressed stamp, and handed it over to the sorters' department. Finally, the inconvenience became so great that the adhesive stamp became imperative.

## A Peep at Newcastle

Eldon Square and Clayton Street were built, but several of the shops and houses above the latter towards the west end were not completed, only the stone work was prepared, doors and windows being boarded up. New Bridge Street claims notice merely as a road to the east end of the town; but we must not forget to mention that a beautiful stone bridge crossed the dene from the top of Trafalgar Street to a point approaching Ridley Villas. This was a most elegant structure of three arches, built of large blocks of well-dressed stone, with parapet to match, and, sad to relate, it was buried up some years ago when the Blyth and Tyne Railway was made. Now the roadway to Ridley Villas is again under reconstruction, to enable the aforesaid railway being joined to the North line at the Manors Station. This new link of line will cross over the old Pandon Dene Bridge, from which a full view up to an old mill, afterwards the "Pear Tree Inn," situated in the very bottom of the ravine, was obtainable. The bridge was erected in the year 1812, and cost £7,448 sterling. In looking up the dene from the bridge was seen a lovely picture of a ravine with water flowing on to the Tyne, which only disappeared into a conduit immediately before reaching this bridge. This ravine formed a complete semicircle to St. Thomas's Church at the Barras Bridge, encircling the old North-umberland Cricket Ground at the east end of Bath Road, near the Riding School. The aforesaid "Pear Tree Inn" is now buried and difficult to locate, but a line



PANDON DENE AND BRIDGE, 1850.





## in the 'Fifties

drawn from the west end of Camden Street to St. Peter's Church at the top of Oxford Street, and bisected at a point about one-third distant from Camden Street, would, as nearly as possible, fix the spot. Another public-house similarly buried, and known in the 'fifties as the "Cricketers' Arms," was at a point about twenty-five yards from the south end of Simpson Street, and about thirty feet down. The water-course of the Pandon Dene on its way to the Tyne passed the north side of St. Thomas's Church, under the Barras Bridge, from Chimney Mills down past Eldon Place, and probably had its origin in some old colliery, such as Spital Tongues. A description of Barras Bridge as it was in the year 1810 will no doubt be interesting, for it formed part of the main coaching road to Edinburgh; and being only of primitive architecture, all that can be said about it is that it was narrow, strong, and ugly, the aperture through which the water passed being of comparatively small dimensions. This bridge became so dangerous to traffic that it was re-built, raised, and considerably widened in the year 1819, and it is this structure that lies buried at the bottom of Eldon Street.

Gas-lighting was first introduced into Newcastle in the year 1818, Mosley Street being the first street to be so honoured; but its progress was only slow, for in the early 'fifties there still remained evidences of the oil lamps in such places as Vine Lane, Pawton Dene Terrace, Causey Bank and Pandon, Stock Bridge, etc. The old man stepping out with his light ladder on his

## A Peep at Newcastle

shoulder and long flaming torch, at lighting-up time, was an object for much fun to boys returning from school on the dark winter evenings. These lamps were of glass, large and globular, and of rather peculiar shape, best described as resembling a "porringer" of olden times, such as children took their milk out of at that period. It is to be feared few will be able to call them to memory, and just as well—they were ugly. Before taking leave of the interior of the town, it is worth remembering that shops were few and far between in those days. Women traversed the streets on market-days with hampers, one above the other, towering on their heads. These baskets varied in size, and contained all kinds of saleable wares. They rested upon a sort of turban called a "weeze." Hawkers had a distinct musical cry for each class of goods they were offering for sale, a few of which we have endeavoured to reproduce.<sup>1</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> The writer has no desire to pose before his old schoolfellows as a musician, and would explain, therefore, that these now obsolete cries were recorded from his dictation by his friend, Mr. Frederick J. Crowest, the obliging editor-manager of the Walter Scott Publishing Company, Limited.

## in the 'Fifties



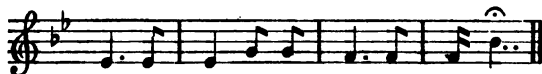
Fine Borg - ny peears. Twenty a pen - ny peears.<sup>1</sup>



Dry'd Bead - nell ware. Fine Bead - nell ware.<sup>2</sup>



Braw lairge gro - sers.



Will ye hev onny lairge new ta - ties?

We have not forgotten "Oyster Jack's" cry—which it would have been a pleasure to quote—but its extraordinary nature excludes it from the category of those things which are among the possibilities of musical notation to express.

Water was in those days sold by hawkers to people in smaller houses where the Newcastle and Gateshead Water Company had not then carried their pipes, at a halfpenny per "skeel." Such water was obtained free from the various "pants," which, strangely, were mostly situated in or adjacent to the churchyards in the

<sup>1</sup> In the year 1853, French russet apples and Hamburg pears were imported superabundantly and sold in *very* inferior condition. Many of the local medical men attributed the cholera visitation to this.

<sup>2</sup> Dried cod fish from Beadnell, Northumberland.

## A Peep at Newcastle

town, such as St. Nicholas', St. John's, St. Andrew's, and All Saints'. St. Peter's, not having a graveyard, did not boast of a pant; but had beneath its roof a very fine oil-painting of the Crucifixion, by John Reed, a local artist, this being his first important commission in the year 1842, after his return from Italy, where he had been studying the Old Masters for a considerable time. One interesting fact connected with this picture is that the celebrated Society beauty, Fanny Brandling of Gosforth Park, "lent a feature" to the artist for one of the women in the picture; and I may add that Disraeli selected the same lady for his heroine in the *Young Duke*. Our authority for this statement is the late Mr. Joseph Cowen, M.P. for Newcastle, who told the writer that Lord Beaconsfield had communicated the information in a conversation, at the time of his representing his native town in Parliament. It is not sufficiently known how descriptive the old Conservative chieftain was in matters of this kind, and those too prone to believe that his books are solely political prophecies, and therefore tame, might, if in search of a love story, venture upon his *Henrietta Temple*.

Having imaginatively walked round and through Newcastle as it was in the 'fifties, we may now be permitted to have a glance at its environs, and naturally Jesmond Dene presents itself for admiration.

It is not the Jesmond Dene as known to us to-day that we have to deal with, but as it was in the fifties, and therefore we must call it by the name

## in the 'Fifties

which was most familiar to us—"The Burn." What memories are recalled here by the dear old name!

We must, according to ancient custom, enter The Burn at Lambert's Leap, as ninety-nine out of every hundred did at the time we write of. Proceeding along what is now known as Grantham Road, at a point about fifty yards from Nater's Brewery, there was a "dropping" well in the wall as we approached the sloping bank, known in those days as the "Slatey" Bank, from its being composed mainly of fire-clay. At this well the writer has seen upwards of twenty young women in a row sitting on their skeels waiting a turn, yet all industriously employed with knitting or other similar work. At the bottom of the bank were to be met the "washing-tubs" immediately opposite a very pretty villa, at that time known as Low Heaton Haugh, and the residence of Mr. Henry Turner, land agent and brick and tile manufacturer. These washing-tubs were in reality a bridge for continuing the stream over a ravine, forming a "race" or water-course, to carry the water to a manufacturer's works, and after joining the original current of The Burn, onward to the river Tyne. Proceeding up The Burn alongside the runner conveying the water to the "tubs," for about two hundred yards, we arrive at a dam constructed to hold up the main stream, and causing a deep reserve of water behind it, which, owing to the overhanging trees, had a dark green

## A Peep at Newcastle

appearance, and therefore by many persons of more recent date erroneously called the Green Water Pool. Such, however, is not its right name; old frequenters of The Burn know this spot to be Temple Vale, the exact locality being about one hundred and twenty yards lower down than the bottom of Goldspink Lane, and almost immediately opposite what is known to-day as Chelmsford Road. This part of The Burn is rapidly being filled up by that fiend the "jerry-builder," who is quickly covering up every possible landmark, and making it almost impossible to fix positions. Passing through the village of Jesmond Vale (a colony of washer-women), we arrive at the Green Water Pool, a circular piece of water at the foot of Jesmond Park. This was the favourite bathing-place of the bigger boys or young men in those days, and having a fine open green with trees, afforded a nice run for drying purposes in lieu of a towel. There was no wall round this patch of green in those days, and it was looked upon as "No Man's Land." A very short distance and we arrive at the Armstrong Bridge, from which we see that once fine old residence known as "Busy Cottage." Many will ask, "Why the name?" as its situation would suggest that it had always nestled in quiet seclusion. In the 'fifties it was quiet, and very quiet; but there were then just a little of the remains from the previous decade to remind visitors that Messrs. Rayne & Burn had a large engineering factory here, made up of forge, foundry,

## in the 'Fifties

fitting and blacksmiths' shops; and one of the partners resided in the old house with the ivy-covered front, and the other within a short distance. Here the late Mr. John Henry Burn (of Cullercoats-by-the-Sea) spent his boyhood, and he, being an Old Bruce Boy, fits in very appropriately with this narrative, as the writer has before him a letter dated 1838, and written by "Johnny" Burn to his cousin, a girl somewhat older than himself. This letter reflects the greatest possible credit upon our Old Boy. A better-written letter, or one more correctly compiled, from the pen of one so young, it has not been the lot of many to enjoy reading. Yet another link connects this young lady-cousin with our Annual Dinners, as she became the wife of the manager of Rayne & Burn's works in Jesmond, and her son, John Henry Gibson, is the worthy Honorary Secretary of our Annual Dinners. We will continue up stream until we arrive at the Banqueting Hall, on the site of which previously was a public-house with fruit gardens, etc., known as Harry Peacock's. It is not sufficiently known how much the public owe to Lady Armstrong for this beautiful park. It was she who superintended nearly the whole of the work while the Banqueting Hall was being built, and had plans altered from time to time as she saw improvements could be made. Is it not reasonable to assume, therefore, that her Ladyship may have had more to do with the original idea than she has been credited with? About three hundred yards up stream on the opposite side we have

## A Peep at Newcastle

the old flint mill, and residence of Mr. Henry Elliot, flint manufacturer, which house was altered to meet the convenience of Captain Noble (now Sir Andrew) on his first coming to the Elswick Works. This house is to-day ornamented (?) with a large sign on the roof informing visitors that refreshments may be had. Continuing higher up, we have the Old Mill, a thing of beauty, and, let us hope, a joy for ever. Here were met quarry excavations, offering a most excellent bathing-place for boys, where they could sport in the water without hindrance of any kind, so few people frequenting the place. Opposite, we now have Sir Andrew Noble's new residence, Jesmond Dene House, upon the site of which formerly stood Dr. Headlam's house. Jesmond Towers, close at hand, was, at the period of which we are speaking, the residence of Mr. Burdon Sanderson (purchased afterwards by Mr. Charles Mitchell). Resuming our position at the Old Mill, immediately below the water-wheel, we have a few "washing-tubs" conveying the water on by runner to Elliot's high flint mill, through which it passed on to work Davidson's flour mill near Busy Cottage.

Retracing our steps, we are again at the Banqueting Hall, with on the west side, facing the old ruin, Jesus Mount. Here we have the "Apple Tree Inn" strawberry gardens, which many people of to-day speak of as "Jesmond Gardens," which is positively incorrect. The old Jesmond Gardens were situated nearer to Stotes Hall, and bordered on the north side by Colling-



## in the 'Fifties

wood Terrace of to-day, but in the 'fifties only a few old-fashioned houses were at the higher end. Captain West, R.N., resided in the top one, which was immediately below Mr. Utrick A. Ritson's residence. The lower end of the gardens now presents to our view Fenwick Terrace, facing a westerly (or north-westerly) direction. The old public-house known as Dewar's "Grapes Inn," afterwards presided over by a man named Reed, was as nearly as possible about the middle of this terrace. Opposite the house were several small huts or sheds, with trestle tables, and clay-ends for quoits—good old stiff-sticking clay-ends—and with the usual accompaniments of nut-brown ale in "black Jacks." For the "missus and kids," tea and strawberries-and-cream were obtainable, and let it be emphatically stated that the locale was the celebrated Jesmond Strawberry Gardens. Mr. Dewar, in his time, supplied private houses with preserving-fruit in the season, and continued to do so after he established his seed-shop in Grey Street. Stepping back to the "Apple Tree Inn," we have Anderson's carriage-drive, to-day almost identical with what it was then. Here let us remark that most of the land at this side of The Burn belonged to the Andersons, wine merchants (Monk-house & Anderson); and on the easterly side, from the Old Mill downwards, the land was Sir Matthew White Ridley's (father of Lord Ridley), who sold it to Sir William G. Armstrong, and when the latter enclosed it the public felt what they considered a grievance very

## A Peep at Newcastle

much, as previously all was open and wild on either side; it was "Go as you please and do as you pleased." Many of the more ignorant positively considered it was theirs by right. Later, however, Lord Armstrong gave it back with compound interest added, and to-day it is the pride of all Novocastrians. We will now proceed up Anderson's drive, passing Jesmond Cottage (their family residence) on the left-hand side. At the top, we met with a clump of trees cut freely with initials, true-lovers' knots, and the like. Here let us rest a moment to remark that northwards we had a very narrow lane, hedge-bound on either side, and so narrow that two persons could not pass without "giving" a little (it might well be called "The Lovers' Walk"). A very small portion is still in existence, and joins the road near to Jesmond Towers. This narrow path ran in a southerly direction, through the "Friday Fields," towards the Clayton Memorial Church, between which and the present Northumberland Cricket Ground was another public-house—Jesmond Field House—with gardens and quoit "pitch." Before we leave this celebrated clump of trees at the top of Anderson's drive, and a very little to the north of the back of some houses known to-day as Grosvenor Villas, let us remark how fortunate Mr. John Alderson was in securing a large plot of ground for a tennis court at the back of No. 5, and securing part of these old trees within his ground. From about this point there was another narrow lane, exactly similar to the one just mentioned,

## in the 'Fifties

which brought you out on the North Road. This lane crossed over what is now the railway, at a point not far from Jesmond West Station. But in the 'fifties we had neither railway nor stations ; all was as absolutely open as the Town Moor. And what a boon it was to have so much freedom and fresh air, when people had not the facilities to run out of town to the seaside or country that they have at the present time ! Our story is very nearly ended. While on the open-space aspect let us again take our base line—the River Tyne from the Glasshouse Bridge to the Shot Tower (say, roughly, two miles)—and bisect that line at the Guildhall on the Sandhill, which becomes the centre, and gives a radius of about one mile to our semicircle. This will sufficiently allow for average purposes to support, if necessary, our open-space contention. Many of the streets in Sandyford Lane east of Simpson Street, and also in Shieldfield north of Franklin Street, and other similar places within our radii, were unbuilt upon ; therefore any houses beyond our circumference would scarcely have filled such vacancies. Scotswood Road, Benwell, Brighton Grove, and Fenham districts were untouched by the “jerry” builder, and likewise were Jesmond, Heaton, and Byker.

The Coaly Tyne must not be overlooked when dealing with the metropolis of the north. It no longer bears the quantity of coal on its surface in keels as formerly, when hundreds found their way down the river, the keels forming a beautiful contrast between their jet black and the

## A Peep at Newcastle

green country around—bringing out the beauties of the surroundings in a manner the people of to-day cannot comprehend. Both sides of the higher river were almost free from works or jetties. For example, from Skinner's Burn to Paradise we could walk nearly all the way, with fields between, to the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway. Along the shore thousands of large Memel logs were chained together so as to be afloat yet anchored at high tide. Now this land is covered by Armstrong, Whitworth & Co.'s Works. At Paradise (which was well named) stood the Fishery House, occupied by a family named Hopper, and here the townspeople rested to see the salmon leap (and salmon they were—not the little trout-like specimens one sees to-day). The mention of Paradise reminds us of a good story of nearly sixty years ago, when "My Lord 'Size" was holding Court in Newcastle, and a witness, under examination by Counsel, said he saw the man "run out of the foot of a chare." This caused his Lordship to ask if the man was competent to give evidence, and being assured that he was, and that it was "chare"<sup>1</sup> and not "chair" he was speaking of, the witness further said, in answer to the question "Where do you live?" "At Paradise, sur," which again caused the judge to ogle him cautiously; but when asked how long he had lived there, and replied "Since the flood," those present roared with laughter, in which his Lordship joined.

<sup>1</sup> "Chare," a narrow lane or alley, of which there are many between the Side and Sandgate on the Quayside.

## in the 'Fifties

There were floods in those days, and earlier; for in 1763 the river was so high that logs of timber floated up the Broad Chare, and a sea-going sloop was washed on to the Quayside. Opposite the old Custom House boats floated up the Side, the damage being computed at £4000, a large sum in those days. The greatest flood recorded was in 1771, when the old Tyne Bridge at Newcastle was washed away; in fact, all the bridges over the river were swept away, with the exception of that at Corbridge, which was built in 1674, on the old Roman foundations. *Sykes' Records* (vol. i.) gives a full and interesting account of this flood, and mentions that "a vessel took up at sea, near Shields, a wooden cradle, with a child in it, which was alone and well." Let the writer of the present book now relate that this child, six months old, was named Mary Leighton, a daughter of a dairy-farmer at Bywell-on-Tyne, near Stocksfield, from which place she was carried by the torrent a distance of twenty-five miles. She was nothing the worse for her perilous voyage, and lived to a good old age. Her grandson, Mr. E. Hardy, carver and gilder, of Blakett Street (opposite Eldon Square), is the writer's authority for the statement.

Opposite to Armstrong's Works we had the King's Meadows Island of about thirty acres, and a smaller island westward about one and a half acre. On the Meadows was a public-house, fully licensed. The landlord also kept cows, and brought his milk daily to the mainland in punts, besides cultivating part in

## A Peep at Newcastle

the growth of grain, etc. Horse-racing was a frequent sport on the Meadows, and an old Bruce Boy, "Billy" Miller, won a race there on his own steed. The Meadows were nearer to the north shore of the river, where Armstrong, Whitworth & Co.'s ship-building yard is to-day, and at low tide the water was only about two feet in depth. On boat-race days the watermen had a rare harvest. They were most modest in their charges for conveying people from the mainland to the island—only a "copper," in keel-loads; but after the "event" the question of "supply and demand" came in, and according to the appearance of the voyager, if he was a "dandy," a "bob-a-nob" was generally demanded and often had to be paid. A "tanner" was a usual fee, and only after the throng had all been removed did these water-sharks return to the standard rate of a penny.

We have much to be grateful for in the River Tyne Commissioners' labours for our canny river. Compare then and now! In the 'fifties the writer waded ("plodged," as it was locally termed) from the Close to Gateshead and back, with trousers turned up to the knee? Then, again, he skated from Scotswood to the Tyne Bridge at Newcastle in the year 1855, in which same winter Mr. John Maling, of Shieldfield Green, had his horse and sledge on the river, while carts laden with goods crossed from Elswick to Dunston for weeks.

It may surprise many readers to learn that the River Tyne Commissioners, in removing those islands to

## in the 'Fifties

improve the water-way for commerce, took no less than 3,000,000 tons of material from the "King's Meadow," and 280,000 tons from the smaller island, known as the "Annie," or more westerly of the two islands.

The improvement of the river is all the more remarkable when we call to mind the launch of so gigantic a vessel as the war-ship *Victoria*, in 1887, the ill-fated vessel which was rammed in the naval manœuvres in the Levant, in 1893, by H.M.S. *Camperdown*—one of the most painful episodes in the records of Britain's naval history. The following is a full description of the ship :—

### H.M. TURRET-SHIP *VICTORIA*.

(FIRST CALLED "RENOVN.")

Built of steel, twin screw.

Displacement	...	...	...	...	10,470 tons.
--------------	-----	-----	-----	-----	--------------

Indicated horse-power	...	...	...	...	12,000 "
-----------------------	-----	-----	-----	-----	----------

Length	...	...	...	...	340 feet.
--------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----------

Beam	...	...	...	...	70 "
------	-----	-----	-----	-----	------

Draught of water	...	...	...	...	27½ "
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Ship built by Armstrong's.

Engines built by Humphrys, Tennant & Co. (London).

Cost—Hull	...	...	...	...	£612,522
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Machinery	...	...	...	...	112,333
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Armour—Side (thick)	...	...	16 to 18 inches		
				(compound).	

Bulkhead (thick)	...	16 inches.
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Turret (thick)	...	18 "	(compound).
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Teak backing (thick)	6 "
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## A Peep at Newcastle

**Guns**—Two 111-ton (first of this weight to out-class Italian 100-ton gun).

One 29-ton.

Twelve 6-inch.

One 5-ton.

Twenty-one quick-firing.

Eight machine.—(45 in all.)

**Torpedo Tubes**—Six fixed.

Two launching carriages.

**Speed** ... .. 16½ knots.

**Bunker Coal** ... .. 1200 tons.

**Coal Endurance at 10 knots speed** ... 7000 knots.

**Firing charge of 111-ton guns**—900 lbs. wght. } All

**Weight of Projectile** ... 1800 „ „ } relating

**Muzzle velocity**—2216 feet per second. } to

**Total energy**—61,200 foot-tons. } guns.

Before leaving the River Tyne, a fact may be worth mentioning which nearly escaped our recollection. Few people passing the spot nowadays would be inclined to imagine that at that part of the river between the Close and Pipewellgate the river fifty years ago was so shallow at low water that hundreds of women and girls might daily have been seen gathering the fall of coal from the keels passing down the river. At this distant date no harm can come to a conjecture as to the origin of this probably welcome coal harvest for these poor people ; but we would suggest that some large proportion of it was probably due to the compassion of some of the crews or “ pee-dee ” on the barges.



## SPORTS, PASTIMES, AMUSEMENTS, ETC.

**HORSE-RACING**, being acknowledged as the sport of kings, takes pre-eminence; and although Newcastle Races, as now held at High Gosforth Park, do not hold the position in the sporting world that the old Town Moor reunions did, owing to so many "gate-money" meetings, which are able to give higher money prizes, having been called into existence, yet we can reflect upon the time when the equine celebrities of the turf furnished the Northumbrians' amusement. Have we not had such noted animals as Beeswing, Charles XII., X Y Z, Lanercost, and Alice Hawthorn to remind us of those by-gone days? and ought we not to be proud of the fact that their blood flows in the veins of the best racers of the present time? Newcastle Race Week always was, and is yet, the people's holiday; even those who take their pleasure otherwise claim this full week for enjoyment. In the old days the Town Moor was alive with people day and night, many of the pitmen from a distance going on the Sunday ("Show-out Sunday"), and not leaving until the sport was over at the end of the week. Every country district was represented by the village "Boni-

## A Peep at Newcastle

face," with his tent, etc. He willingly extended his hospitality to the extent of a bundle of straw for a bed. Many of these country visitors never so much as saw a race, their enjoyment being confined to quoit-playing and refreshment until they "outran the constable," which, interpreted, means until their funds were ended. Yet, on the whole, they were orderly, and would well compare with some of the scenes of a later period at the Temperance (?) Festival, which has now taken the place of racing on the Town Moor in the last week in June each year. Racing in the 'fifties is what we should more correctly confine ourselves to; therefore let us view the Moor as it was on a race-day at that time. Solely as a matter of record would we mention that in the year 1849, and previously, some races were run in "heats." In the years 1850 and 1851 the number of heats run became less, until in 1852—the year Stilton won the Northumberland Plate—heats would appear to have been discontinued entirely, causing the late John Scott, the "Wizard of the North," to remark, "They are all last after the first." In support of this fact the judge was not called upon to place a second and third in a race; neither did he do so if the finish was particularly close, and any doubt likely to arise. In this year (1852) there were three days' racing as at present; but in 1850 and 1851 racing was carried on from Monday to Thursday inclusive, while in 1849 and earlier periods the race-week was from Monday to Friday inclusive. Such patrons as Lord Eglinton, Lord

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Glasgow, Baron Rothschild, Sir Charles Monck (Belsay), Colonel Townley, etc., then countenanced the sport. There probably were not less than a hundred tents, representing publicans who had obtained a temporary licence, and these tents were so erected as to form streets opposite the Grand Stand, the principal one being named "St. Leger" Street. There were also a dozen or more wooden stands extending from the Grand Stand eastward at a high elevation. Beneath and behind was a large area covered by canvas, available to accommodate visitors with meat and drink; besides which there were a dozen or more wooden offices specially erected for the convenience of the bookmaking fraternity to carry on their business in comfort. It is absolutely impossible to compute the number of people present, but of one thing we can make sure, that there were more people under canvas in any of those years when Underhand won the Northumberland Plate three years in succession than have been seen all told at Gosforth Park at any one time; and it may be assumed that there were as many more not under canvas.

**The Grand Stand** of course held a goodly number of visitors, but the price kept it and the "ring" free from overcrowding. We ourselves have seen more than fifty Northumberland Plates run, many of the earlier ones being viewed from a considerable distance from the throng, but we well remember Stilton's winning in 1852 as being our first approach to the terminus of the race. This fact need not have been recorded except to

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mention and describe a conspicuous old gentleman on the balcony of the Grand Stand, whom we saw from the carriage in which we were sitting. Carriages in those days lined both sides of the course. This was Lord Glasgow, and as there are many people who make much of seeing a real live lord, it was a likely thing to impress the memory of a child, and we may be pardoned for still retaining it. He was dressed just to tickle the fancy of a youngster—a coat of some tinted colour, either blue or green, with a vest of drab, and his coat appeared to be cut-away, “swallow-tailed,” and, with his knee-breeches and white stockings, he was as like our feathered summer visitors as well can be imagined. Racing has many enemies, composed mostly of those people who know nothing about it. These faddists look on at people gambling with corn and other food-stuffs, minerals, railways, or insurances of steamers in which they have no interest, selling largely things that have no existence, ending often in ruin to many, and occasionally themselves included. Stiff-necked financiers will even assist such gamesters in their ungodly ventures, and when the crash comes apparent sympathisers meet the occasion with some such milk-and-water excuse as a “misfortune,” “calamity in business,” “unforeseen disaster.” Now for the other side. When the average Briton, whom we may reasonably call an honest man, ventures to assert his natural independence of character by trying his luck with even a hardly-earned shilling, “quidlet,” or “quid,” upon the speed

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of a horse or the skill of a jockey, he is stamped by those having no taste for the great game as a gambler. *Cui bono?* where's the difference? When lotteries were openly conducted behind the Grand Stand on every race in the 'fifties (these were practically on the co-operative principle amongst well-known tradesmen and business people with their friends), it is possible that less harm was done than at the present day, when those who will have a "flutter" are driven to the tender mercies of the professional "bookie."

A very good story of the old races on our Town Moor is told by the "Druid"<sup>1</sup>—Henry Dixon, Esq., a scholar and a sportsman, not only in his Rugby days, but all through life. Lord Rosebery has spoken of him with rare penetration as "half sportsman and half poet." In *Scott and Sebright* (p. 36), "The Druid" writes respecting the "Pilgrims' Rest at Gosforth":—"Bob Johnson was an eminent member of that school of industry (jockeys) which met during Newcastle Race-meeting in the servants' hall at Gosforth. Mr. Brandling liked the custom kept, and often a 'muffled' troop of Sim, Jaques, Scott, Harry Edwards, Holmes, Garbutt, Cartwright, Lye, Oates, Gray, etc., would be found there about ten o'clock, sipping the warm ale which the butler always had in readiness for them after their three miles' walk from the Grand Stand, and listening, if Bill

<sup>1</sup> "The Druid's memory deserves to be held in honour by succeeding generations."—HON. FRANCIS LAWLEY.

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Scott was not there just i' the vein, to Bob Johnson's comments on nags and men. One morning Bob did not get on with his ale, and Mr. Brandling asked him if there was anything else he would like better. 'I don't knaw, sir,' he said, 'but I should like a bottle of your champagne.' It was accordingly brought, and Bob considered that he put his host up to such a good thing for the day while they were drinking it that he wound up with, 'Weel, I think I should like another away with me, Mr. Brandling, to drink your health when I've won.' His companions protested in vain, but Mr. Brandling was intensely amused, and sided so energetically with Bob that another was fetched and duly stuffed into his pocket, and away he went rejoicing, and verified his Gosforth tip by beating Sim cleverly."

**COCK-FIGHTING** follows horse-racing, because "mains" were always fought in Gallowgate on the mornings of race days, and "cocking," as it was termed, was so attractive that men who took little or no interest in the afternoon business on the Moor, came considerable distances for the so-called sport. There are people who argue that it is not a cruel pastime, as the birds show a liking for it, and are always ready for the fray. Possibly they may be right; but, before finally accepting that theory, the cocks should express their opinion, and let us know if they are agreeable to try conclusions with the steel "bayonets" on. It is a cruel and



LORD DECIES.

WRESTLING GROUND.





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barbarous custom, and rightly prohibited by law. Yet what a hard death it is dying, for it is not dead absolutely. There are many places where battles are still engaged in, and even within very recent date have battles taken place in the actual heart of this city, and within earshot of the policeman's heavy-footed tread.

**WRESTLING** will only be remembered by some of our older inhabitants, as the old green near the Shot Tower—where Lord Decies presided in the brick and slated grand-stand, which he aided so much in erecting—has long since passed away. Richard Lowery, Goods Agent for the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway Company, acted as Honorary Secretary, and to him every credit was due, otherwise the sport would not have continued as long as it did. The "Easter Wrestlings" brought all the champions from Cumberland, Westmorland, etc.; and it is not saying too much to assert that the town was alive with excitement when such gladiators as Jamieson and Dick Wright were to the fore. In comparison with the numbers of sportsmen then and now, the stir and general interest was not even second to football of to-day. The wives, mothers, sisters, and aunts came with the "giants" to applaud and encourage them in the bout, by calling out the colour of their attire, which they themselves had often taken pains to have conspicuous for their hero's decoration in the ring. This attire not unfrequently might as

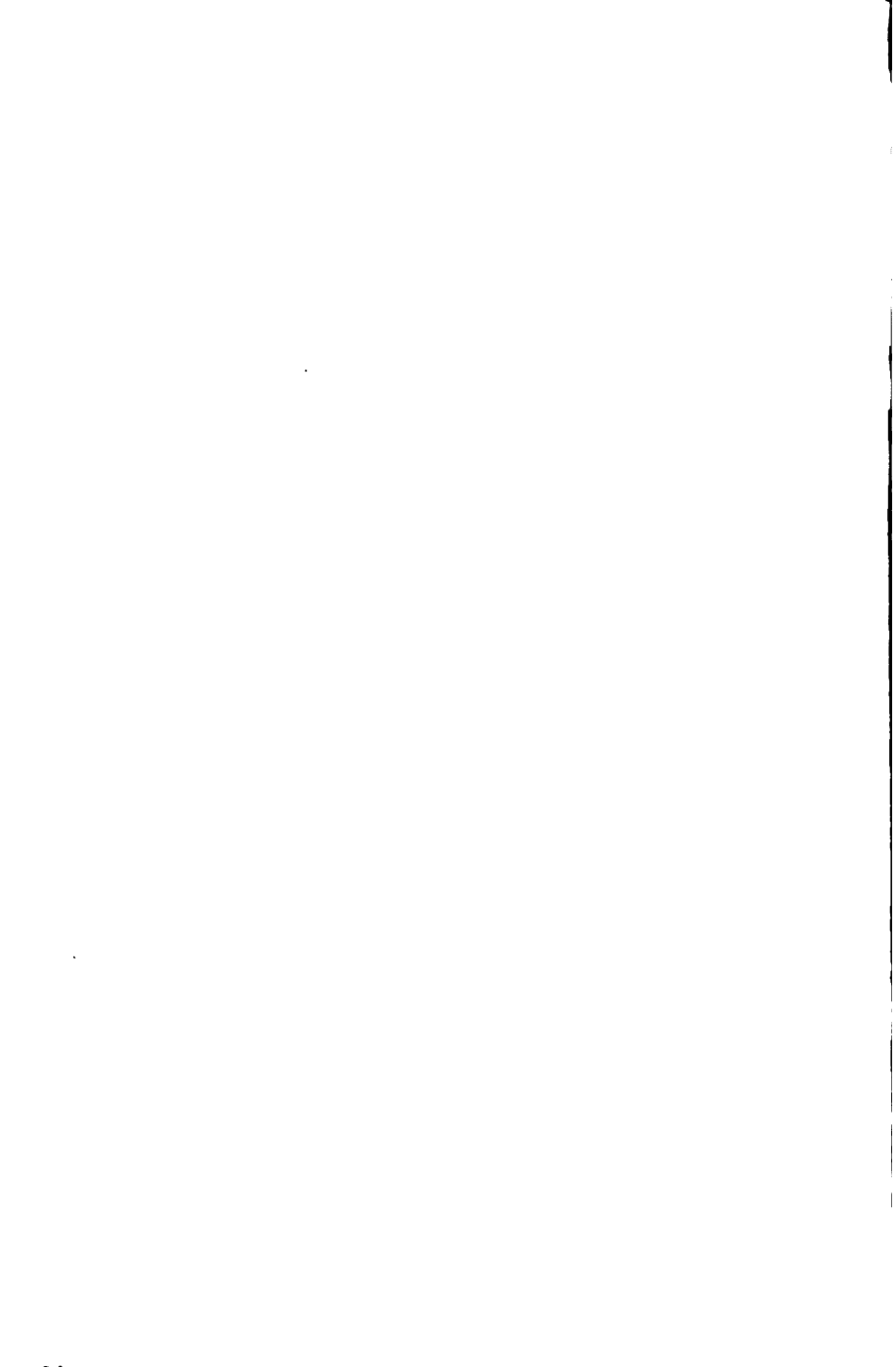
## A Peep at Newcastle

well have remained at home, when once the couple got a "hank!"

**BOWLING** was a more modest form of sport, and only enjoyed by the more fortunate in position, whose purse would enable them to become members of the only green in the town—if not in the North—such membership not always being obtainable even then. It is sad to think that the dear old green is lying idle through no fault of its own or the late members, who left it years ago because it was urgently wanted for town improvements which are still not commenced, and may not be for long enough! There was a most substantial brick club-house with dining-room, which frequently seated nearly forty members and their friends, to a dinner which was prepared every Friday at 6.30 P.M. Yet this was not up to the standard of earlier times, when the postal service provided only two deliveries of letters each day. Then, after the morning's work was over, the merchants and others made their way daily to Bath Lane Green for two o'clock luncheon, and played bowls until near 6.30, when the second deliveries of letters were sent round. Members returned after dinner for evening play, and later to cards or chess inside the club-room. A very good story is told of this old green. The members, being so interested over their indoor play, frequently sat well into the morning, even to the time when an old man who managed the lead works adjacent was looking about for the arrival of his workmen, and he



THE BOWLING GREEN, BATH LANE (WEST WALLS).



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not unfrequently, in a friendly way, rebuked the players for having seen their light very late the previous night. One morning, however, the old gentleman came on to the green at 5 A.M., and complimented them on their early rising, telling them how much better it was for health, and would enable them to enjoy their breakfasts all the more. Is it necessary to say more? They had just left the card-tables for a change of amusement and fresh air.

*Richardson's Table Book* says:—"A new bowling-green was opened in Newcastle on 12th June 1827, on which occasion the members (about twenty) dined in a temporary hotel upon the ground. Mr. Crawhall acted as president, and Mr. George Burnet as vice-president. The bowlers were honoured with the company of the Mayor, Sheriff, and Town Clerk. The bowling-green is on the north-west side of the town—without the walls—on a plot of ground formerly called the Mayor's Field, also the Warden's Close, adjoining the Bath Lane."

It will be observed it is called a new bowling-green, the original having had to be abandoned in the Forth (or People's Playground, in former times).

**BOWLING**, or "Booling," as the pitman terms it, is quite another sport—a game of strength and skill. The best throwing of a bowl over the mile is generally the condition of the match. Of course the weight of the bowl is stated, and often in the form of a handicap, one

## A Peep at Newcastle

player concedes the other several ounces. But the most extraordinary part of the thing is the accuracy with which competitors throw the bowl. One seldom hears of a serious accident; yet the "pitch" is lined with spectators for a 100 yards or more, forming a long avenue of people as narrow as ten or twelve feet. It is usual for each player to have a man, a "shower-up," to "bonnet" for him. This man sits on his "hunkers," pitman fashion, just where he desires his mate to drop the bowl, often holding his hand out to indicate the spot with the words: "Put her here, marrow," and not removing his hand until the bowl has arrived at the exact spot. It is not unusual for the thrower in his excitement while throwing to cry out, "War the bool," or "Sit on there, Geordy." The fact of a man throwing a 40-ounce bowl 63 yards will give some idea of the difficulty of being an expert with these playthings. Yet this was the record of Henry Brown, champion in the 'fifties, and has never been equalled. The following are some of Brown's best performances:—

With a 5-oz. bowl, 144 yards

„	10	„	130	„
„	15	„	100	„
„	20	„	93	„
„	25	„	85	„
„	30	„	76	„
„	35	„	67	„
„	40	„	63	„

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**ROWING** was full of life in the 'fifties, and possibly one reason for it was that the open shore along the river-side gave opportunity for seeing the men at exercise. Chambers—"Honest Bob"—and his mentor, "good old" Harry Clasper, were not only the pride of Tyne-side, but the admiration of the whole world. Every one felt sure when "Bob" was afloat that he was a "trier"; when either in double-sculls with "Ned" Winship, or single-handed, the honour of Coaly Tyne was in safe hands. Would that this could always have been so! It will answer no purpose to compare Chambers with Hanlan—the sliding-seat making all the difference, both in style and result.

Amateur rowing was much indulged in at the period we are considering, and Mr. Tom Pickett, a railway clerk, was in the foremost rank; only to be followed by an equally good man in Mr. James Wallace, a bank clerk, who may yet be frequently seen on country roads on his cycle, and save for his "silver nut" might still be mistaken for a youngster.

**Renforth's death** was a sad blow to professional rowing. The Yankee "dope" was at the bottom of it, and "death without glory" was his end. Death-bed confessions (or the like) sometimes reveal strange facts, and bring to life carefully-guarded secrets; so when the "dope" in the trial had no effect, an increased dose was resorted to for the race, which ended fatally. His fellow-oarsmen had the sad grief to bear and do their duty to the departed comrade, and manfully they

## A Peep at Newcastle

set themselves to the task, not then suspecting how or why this had been brought about. R.I.P.

**CRICKET** never took the high stand in Northumberland that it did farther South, yet there were times when fine cricket was played on the old ground at the end of Bath Road, off Northumberland Street. Beldon and Clay were our best amateurs in the 'fifties. The All-England Eleven occasionally came North, and play generally was against eighteen or twenty of the home men, and even on these handicap terms the local men suffered defeat.

**SWIMMING** in the Northumberland Baths at the end of Ridley Place was only engaged in in a half-hearted way in the 'fifties. Some Old Bruce Boys will remember Professor Paulton's periodical visits to teach them natation, which was more to their fancy than learning dancing from M. Charles D'Albert at Percy Street Academy, and having to play the rôle of lady, which was sadly against the dancing-class succeeding. Mr. Thomas Pape, of Collingwood Street, at a later period, fairly electrified frequenters to the baths by his clever movements in the water, being the first in the North to introduce the side-stroke, and even the double side-stroke (hand-over-hand). William Walker, who followed Paulton at these baths, informed the writer that Pape, if he had cared to enter the list of professionals, could easily have been Champion



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of England, notwithstanding Harry Gurr's ability. George Benson is another amateur who deserves mention for the part he has taken in swimming with a view to encouraging youth. He took his first prize as a boy of eleven in 1854, and has supplemented it with several silver cups; he is swimming yet, and is President of the Association this year. Mr. Benson has given both time and money to the sport without stint.

**ARCHERY** was confined almost entirely to the gentry, possibly because it was unsafe to practise it on public ground. Yet it was not an unusual sight to see ladies and gentlemen making their way to the Archery Club Grounds in Northumberland Street, a strip of land at the back of Singleton House, and extending to the Riding School, being used.

**The Noodles** also used this ground for drill purposes. It seems hard to call our brave home forces by this name after their excellent work in South Africa, but, after all, was it not a term of endearment? Where is the man to-day that can look back fifty or sixty years without accusing himself of having at some time in his youth called out—

“Blue-tailed bum'ler,  
Cock-tail tumbler,  
Fireside soul'ger,  
Dornit gan t' war.”

## A Peep at Newcastle

The Yeomanry of that date served a very useful purpose, giving zest to the military cause before the Volunteers (grey-coated riflemen) were established in the late 'fifties.

**Sentry-Go** in Newcastle will take many readers by surprise, being a reflection of Continental usage; but as we are on military topics and at Singleton House, we note that here, in the early 'fifties, the last was seen of soldiers with fixed bayonets walking in front of the house, a sentry-box being stationed at either side of the front door. If a rough guess had to be hazarded, the writer would suggest that for a time it was the temporary residence of the colonel of the regiment stationed at the Barracks. The changing of the guard was quite an exciting feature during the time it was in vogue. An old friend of the writer's, in conversing about this, said, "Might it have been Sir John Fife's house?" Certainly not. Sir John's residence was in Hood Street at that time, and the Volunteers had not then been established.

**Fire** (Quayside, 1854) is dealt with in Sir Wemyss Reid's remarks already reproduced.

**The FAIR**, held twice a year (Spring and Autumn), at Carliol Square around the Gaol, cannot be passed over lightly. It was a sight, once seen, never to be forgotten. *Sykes* says: "On July 12th, 1837, the Fair



THE GREAT FIRE AT NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE AND GATESHEAD, 1854.



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heretofore held on the Sandhill and Side was, by order of the Council, removed to Carliol Square on this and subsequent occasions," which means that every available yard of ground from the foot of the Royal Arcade steps to the top of Carliol Street and side-streets was occupied by stall-holders, showmen, -etc., and their customers. Pandemonium it was, but even that conveys no idea of the scene, nor is it possible for any ordinary pen to paint it. Those Fairs were praiseworthy and useful in times earlier than the 'fifties, and far from unnecessary even at the latter period, or even later. Thereat housewives replaced damaged articles or invested in renewed efforts to beautify their homes as necessity required, the facilities for purchasing in shops being very limited; besides, the cost was greater, owing to rents, rates, and other expenses, as against the place-to-place wanderers' prices. Not only so, but generally the class of articles sold in the Fair were what were known as "seconds," somewhat inferior when sorted at the respective factories, and not what would pass at the shops; hence the apparent (?) gain to the class of customers, many from outlying places, who saved up their spare cash for the Fair-time. There were stalls with Sheffield goods, others with china and Staffordshire wares, brushes, hardware, and all kinds of household requirements, and those who could not depend on themselves to appraise the articles they required had the auction vans to fall back upon. These were of the Dutch-auction kind. The man or woman

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would offer an article, say at five shillings. "What! no buyers? Will any one say four shillings? Here, three shillings? two shillings? Well, eighteenpence takes the lot." This was generally a signal for some one to appropriate the coveted gem, and any further quantity could be had by others at the price. Not infrequently some "flat" set the market at a higher price than would have been taken, and good "biz" resulted for the vendors. This description will illustrate the Fair proper, but the *et cetera* baffle description. Shows of all kinds nearly to the top of Carliol Street. Performing animals, monkey fortune-tellers, woman rat-eater, freaks of various kinds, with accompanying din and noise outside; roundabouts, swing-boats, and every conceivable annoyance to the people occupying the houses in the neighbourhood. And in those days Carliol Street was totally different from the present day, being inhabited by ministers of religion, merchants, tradespeople, etc., having their shops in Pilgrim Street and elsewhere, many of whom had to close their houses for nine days twice a year, and remove their families to the seaside or country. Add to all this the open gambling on tables, "compass-marked circular" with a revolving pointer. The players staked their coins on which colour they preferred, except one marked with a crown. If the pointer stood at the latter, the owner of the table swept the board; if at any other, the fortunate one became the possessor of the coins on the other colours. How this open swindling was tolerated for so many

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years is past understanding, for it was well known even then that the table had a button which the owner could use at will, and stop the pointer where he pleased. For the younger gamblers of the boy-and-girl sort, "Billy Fairplay" was there in all his glory. Billy was a wooden man about eighteen inches high, with a corkscrew groove around his frame. It was placed on a board about two feet in diameter, which was covered with small holes, each numbered and large enough to admit a big marble, which each player dropped into Billy's hat. The marble passed round the corkscrew-like groove, and eventually deposited itself into one of the holes, the player obtaining the highest number being the winner. On this stall gambling was for spice-bread or fruit-loaf only, which the winner received according to the funds subscribed. There did not appear to be anything unfair about this, as fair value was given; but the harm done to the morals of the young was incalculable, the more so because, if a player, even with luck, was penniless but well stocked with spice, the stall-holder would repurchase the spice, and set the player "on tar" again! All this was openly tolerated in Newcastle fifty years ago. At about eight o'clock the crowd assembled in force—the artisan, his wife, the apprentice, and the servant-girl, the latter being usually allowed one night for her "fairing," as it was called. The air was polluted almost to suffocation. By the hour before midnight it was almost impossible to move in the throng, and although intoxicated people were few and far between, yet the

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excitement was so intense that women became hysterical; and what with the yelling and shouting, the noise of the drums of the various shows, the glare of the flaming oil-lamps, and the stink of the naphtha, one almost realised that the words of the immortal bard—

“’Tis now the very witching time of night,  
When churchyards yawn, and Hell itself breathes out  
Contagion to this world,”

had at last become true. Such was the Newcastle Fair in the 'fifties. Yet let it be said to the credit of the people themselves that in course of time, possibly with the advancement of civilising influences, the Fair began to wane; slowly it might have been, but surely, until it became but a skeleton of its former self. Practically nothing remained of a tradelike appearance, and the authorities wisely terminated its existence, having no wish to encourage only the “rowdy” part.

**PUBLIC EXECUTION.** This wretched spectacle was performed for the last time in Newcastle on the very spot where the Fair was held. In the early 'sixties a man named Vass was tried and condemned to death for the murder and outrage of an old woman near the “West Walls.” The whole length of street from the Arcade steps to Carliol Street was barricaded strongly at very short intervals, forming



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pens to avoid accidents through the enormous crowd anticipated, and well it was so, for every available space was filled. The writer viewed the situation from the roof of a house immediately opposite the scaffold, which was erected on the *top* of the gaol wall at the south-west corner opposite the railway bank that leads to Pilgrim Street; and looking down as far as the eye could carry, the whole thoroughfare had the appearance of a street paved with human heads. These people had assembled as early as 5.30 A.M. By 8 o'clock the crowd was so dense that dozens of people had fainted; and these were passed over the heads of the multitude to the outside. The story of the execution is soon told; the condemned man was under a minute in view before he disappeared from the gaze of the bloodthirsty mob.

**FALCONRY** was last enjoyed in Newcastle as a sport in the early 'fifties. The exact date being very difficult to obtain, the writer has to rely entirely on memory. Yet he has some considerable confidence in fixing on the year 1852, the occasion being the subject of discussion shortly after the Great Exhibition of 1851. To it Mr. John Hancock sent falcons stuffed, dressed, and hooded, and these birds were the first to make his name famous as a taxidermist. The sport we are dealing with was conducted on the Town Moor, between Chimney Mills and the North Road, at a point known as the Newcastle Turn of the old racecourse, and was witnessed by a large number of people, but not

## A Peep at Newcastle

excessively so. We must not forget that we are to-day taking a retrospective look; and although youthful impressions are lasting, yet the eye of childhood measures differently from the adult. The gentleman who gave the entertainment had several falconers with him in charge of any number of birds, from eight upwards; at any rate there was more than one perch, and each held a few falcons, hooded, until wanted, to obscure their view of what was going on around them. It is impossible to ascertain what breed of falcon they were, but, judging by their size and dark colour as compared with others since seen in collections, it might be hazarded that they were of the peregrine order. The bird of prey being liberated, it soared high in the air; then a pigeon was set up, and the hawk hovered over the quarry for a while, which caused the pigeon to visibly tremble with fear in the air. This only for an instant, when down came the hawk in a perpendicular line, and all was over. If cruel, it was still a beautiful sight; but one cannot help feeling that it is better recorded with the past. If necessary in olden times to secure food for man, it has answered its purpose; but if only for amusement purposes, we can well do without it. Lest there be some of my readers who think otherwise, let them ask themselves the question—Would they like to be placed in an undefended state in close proximity to a large eagle? So far as Newcastle is concerned, we may conclude that we have seen the end of a sport that was known 2000 years B.C.

## in the 'Fifties

**PIGEON-FLYING**, or pigeon-“coming” as it was called in the 'fifties, was totally different to the “homing” of to-day. These encounters were not decided by the “stop” watch. A man flying his bird against that of another, won the match by the first securing of the bird on its return to its home-loft. The bird was then put into a canvas bag and handed to a “runner,” who went “tappy-lappy” to a fixed point, where the judge awaited its arrival, and decided which had won. This was carried on to a large extent in the early 'fifties. The author remembers a match between a man named Fawdon, who had a “whiting” factory in Pipewellgate, Gateshead, and a resident at the east end named Walker. The judge stood on the Pandon Bridge (New Bridge Street), and thousands of people lined either side of the street. The first to appear was the Gateshead runner, very lightly clad in professional running-garb, entering from Blakett Street at the top of Carliol Street (Weaver's Tower). Another runner was ready to snatch the bag containing the bird—they having relays of runners—when a policeman arrested the “new” man with the bird, which latter was deftly passed to a bystander, who proceeded with it and won the match. The “bobby” followed the bird a little way, when a friendly (?) foot caused him to lick the ground.

**THE FLOWER SHOW** in Newcastle, a very small affair in the 'fifties, was held in a tent on that rising ground about opposite Jesmond High Terrace, and north

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of the Museum. The Race Week was generally chosen as a time when the attendance would be likely to benefit by the influx of visitors to the town.

**HOPPINGS** were the very life of the poor, pure, and innocent inhabitants of Newcastle in the 'fifties. Vulgar possibly they might have been, but nothing worse can be recorded against them. The artisan of the period had not then assumed the snobbish imitation of those in a higher sphere of life; he was proud of being an honest working-man, and willing to give his employer value for his money—not as now, “stealing” time, as is so well known to the employers of labour of the present day. That his position is much, and deservedly, improved no one would deny nor begrudge, if only he would act “as a man,” and not tyrannise over others who have a right to claim free trade in labour. If we compare wages of to-day with those of the 'fifties, it will be seen how very much better the working-man is to-day with the exception of the house rent:—

	1853.		1903.
Mechanics,	24/- to 25/- per wk.	...	33/- to 35/- per wk.
Labourers,	15/- to 18/- „	...	22/- to 25/- „

### PURCHASING POWER.

	1853.		1903.
Flour	- - - 4/- per st.	...	1/6 per st.
Tea	- - - 4/- per lb.	...	1/6 per lb.
Sugar	- - - 9d. „	...	3d. „
Candles, common	- 10d. „	...	6d. „

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The reduction in the price of clothing is also fully as favourable to the buyer. If the higher wages on the one hand are examined alongside of the reduction in the prices of household necessities, it is certainly a case of "lighting the candle at both ends" to the advantage of the working-man of to-day. Has Free Trade alone done all this? Has steam on land and water to have no share of the credit?

**Trades Unionism** has answered a good and useful purpose in all this local life; and commendable as it is, that the working-man should have benefited himself so much, he should leave to others that freedom of action which he claims for himself. It will be seen from these "peeps" that the people of the 'fifties had to take their Easter holidays in a much more primitive style than now. There was neither the money nor the facilities for seaside or country trips.

**The Hoppings** served their purpose. To describe the fun and frolic of the Hoppings is no easy task, but there were several at Gallowgate, Byker, Jesmond, etc., the latter offering the greater facilities at Jesmond Vale. The greasy pole, with a leg of mutton at the top for the successful climber, was unending fun. Pennies, heated on a frying-pan, were thrown from surrounding houses, old women ran for packets of tea, and men grinned ("gorned" it was called) through horse-collars for pounds of tobacco; while boys stood in a row, hands tied behind their backs, and ate rolls

## A Peep at Newcastle

of bread dipped in treacle hanging from a line. Occasionally a friendly visitor would purchase the stock of an orange-girl's basket and throw it into The Burn; then followed men, women, and children, and none escaped without being wet to the skin. Had any one offered them a price to go in in cool blood it would have been declined; but, like sheep, one went, the others followed. Last, but not least, was the donkey race for a saddle and bridle; each man riding his neighbour's donkey, and "last in" won. This ensured them all trying, which cannot always be said of races "under the rules."

**Sword-dancing** was more associated with Christmas, but the chance of obtaining some of the gratuities of the festive season induced the sword-dancers to join issue with the other frivolous amusements going on. These consisted of five or six pitmen dressed in grotesque garb, mostly of cheap-coloured calico and tinsel, with faces well daubed with paint and burnt cork. They were generally very orderly, and credit must be given to them for the performance of their dances. Each was armed with a sword made of thin hoop-iron, which collectively was used in a fashion to intertwine or form a net-work over their heads. This was one of many attitudes in which they engaged. One of the party, dressed "Dolly Varden" style, acted as the lady, or "Bessy" as "she" was called, and played the all-important part of collecting "dibs" from the crowd.

## in the 'Fifties

**Newspapers** at this period were costly reading for the general run of the inhabitants. They were weekly issues at 4½d. per copy (two-thirds of which went to the Government as stamp duty), and it was no unusual thing to see a card in the window of a small shop—"Newspapers lent; a halfpenny per hour." Small advertisements were unknown, and announcements of the "lost or found" kind had to be made by handbills if the funds permitted, or by the Town Crier in uniform. This was Mr. John Higgins, better known as "Johnny the Bellman," who must have been blessed with an exceedingly good temper, judging by the sport the street urchins made at his expense without disturbing him.

**The Telegraph** was in its infancy. A very few years before this decade *Sykes* says: "In 1846 the electric telegraph was completed on the Newcastle and Darlington Railway. A few weeks after the communication with the southern lines was carried out, and on the 16th of September the result of the race for the St. Leger Stakes at Doncaster was received at the Station in Gateshead at twenty-eight minutes past six o'clock, to the astonishment of the public generally."

**Sedan chairs** were not entirely superseded by the hackney coaches until near the end of the 'fifties, and one or two with the proprietor's name, Elgey, painted on the panels, generally stood for hire at the top of Bell's Court in Pilgrim Street. A very good story

## A Peep at Newcastle

of the 'thirties is worth recording. The Mayor had given a dinner-party, at which two officers quartered at the Barracks were guests; and on leaving, the major, who had his carriage and pair waiting for him, offered his captain a lift, which for some reason was declined, with the words, "I am in a hurry." This rather "pricked" the major, who offered a wager that he could not find a quicker way, hurry or no hurry. The major's carriage had not gone far when the captain called on a "chair." "Now, my lads, a pound a-piece for you if you get to the Barracks before that carriage." The next thing the captain knew was that he was on his back struggling to regain his upright position; but in less time than it takes to relate he was restored to his equilibrium and was passing St. Nicholas' Church at full speed. By the time his "chair" was going up Darn Crook the major was a long way in the rear, and on his arrival at the goal he, to his astonishment, had lost his wager. The chair-men had raced up the long stairs from the Mansion House in the Close to the Castle Garth, thereby gaining a considerable advantage!

**Electric Light**, according to *Sykes*, was first shown upon the Castle of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, by Mr. Staite, the patentee, in the year 1852.

**Emigrants** direct for Australian goldfields left Newcastle by a sailing vessel named the *Sporting Lass*, in the year 1852; and when it is remembered that



## in the 'Fifties

the majority of the excursions to that far-away land up to that time had been made at the "Government's expense," some idea can be formed of the unusual excitement caused by the new departure.

"God speed the keel of the trusty ship  
That bears you from our shore;  
There is little chance that ye'll ever glance  
On our chalky sea-beach more."

—ELIZA COOK.

**The Theatre**, in the singular, as we had only one. This was the Royal, in Grey Street—in the 'fifties, acknowledged to be one of the neatest and most compact in the kingdom, although it was small. The pit had not in those days been enlarged and extended under the dress circle, so that a person standing on the back seat of the pit had his head on a level with the red velvet-cushioned rest around the front of the circle. These were the days of "stock" companies, when actors had to work. They had to play to orders, at very short notice too, and not have plays "written round" them or made suitable for their peculiar styles or defects, as is common in the present day; but they, on the contrary, had to adapt themselves to their parts, frequently playing in ten or twelve different pieces in a week, and not infrequently having "casts" altered at less than twenty-four hours' notice. It was customary to have two good pieces each evening, commencing at 6.30 P.M., and finishing well on to 11.30, and on

## A Peep at Newcastle

special occasions after midnight. At nine o'clock admission was gained at half-price, hence the necessity of providing a good second piece for those whose business ties would not permit of their attending earlier. Mr. Edward Dean Davis was the lessee, himself a most finished actor, as those can testify who remember his rendering of "The Stranger." "The Porter's Knot" and "Maid of Milan" were amongst other plays that furnished him with opportunities to display his rare talents. Mr. Davis's brother, Sydney, was probably the best-known man in the profession over the length and breadth of England, as no character came wrong to him in cases of emergency; if called upon to act at a moment's notice, tragedy, comedy, or pantomime were safe in his hands. A valuable man he was in those times. So was Alfred Davis a "man of many parts," whose dancing of the double sailor's hornpipe with Miss Julia Desborough at a later period probably has not been equalled since in Newcastle. It was for Miss Desborough's benefit, and although it was many years after her professional dancing-days, she had not forgotten her "steps," and danced Alfred to a standstill. Needless to say, Miss Desborough danced in ordinary attire—long frock—with only her feet and ankles to be seen; but it was enough. The pity is that to-day we have not more steps and more drapery. Mr. William Gourlay had no equal in portraying Scottish character, and being a resident of Newcastle, he was a very familiar friend. Touring companies were unknown,



**BRYAN J. PROCKTER.**



## in the 'Fifties

but we had visits occasionally from the leading "stars," such as Phelps, Charles Kean, Charles Pitt, Charles Mathews, and last, but not least, James R. Anderson; and of the gentler sex, Miss Glyn, Ada Cushman, Rebecca Isaacs, Miss Marriott, Miss Gibb (sister to Dr. Charles J. Gibb), Madame Celeste, Madame Vestris, and Miss Julia St. George, our own townswoman, born in the Broad Chare, Quayside, and partly educated at the Clergy Jubilee School, behind the gaol. This lady was an actress and vocalist of very high order, and Newcastle people are proud that her early childhood was spent in Pandon Dene, where her mother resided in a small cottage. Lady Don was another Newcastle favourite in those old days, playing in the pantomime of "Kenilworth," in which she sang "Ever of Thee," and the pleasing recollection of it is still fresh in the memory of many of her friends to-day. An Old Bruce Boy tells of his passing through Detroit, U.S.A., in the year 1869, and seeing her name on the play-bills, called at her residence and sent up his card, much to her Ladyship's delight, as she was alone almost in a strange land, and Bryan J. Prockter had known Sir William and her years before in England. He was invited to dinner the next day, and, to use Mr. Prockter's own words, her Ladyship made the Christmas pudding "with her own hands." Sir William Don was a very tall man, probably not less than 6 feet 6 inches, and was best known as the "husband of Lady Don," who in her younger days sang as Miss Emily E. Saunders, her maiden name.

## A Peep at Newcastle

In case it should be thought that the author had forgotten Miss Emily Cross (Mrs. Jobling), it is enough to say she was of a later decade, but deservedly popular, and it is just possible Newcastle never had a more permanent favourite.

Having trespassed beyond the 'fifties to mention Miss Cross, we will venture to refer to an amateur performance in the Assembly Rooms, Westgate Street, which, if not in touch with the "Royal," had a bearing upon the profession generally, and it is not too much to say that such a cast may never be equalled again in Newcastle. From the bill of the play before the writer as he writes, the piece was

**"NOT SO BAD AS WE SEEM,"**

given at the Assembly Rooms, Westgate Street, on 27th August 1852. The performers included, amongst others—

Mr. Frank Stone, A.R.A.,  
Mr. Charles Dickens,  
Mr. Wilkie Collins,  
Mr. John Tenniel,  
Mr. Mark Lemon,  
Mr. Augustus Egg, A.R.A.,  
Mrs. Henry Compton,  
Mrs. Coe,  
Miss Fanny Young,

—the proceeds being for the benefit of the Amateurs' Company of the Guild of Literature and Art "to encourage life assurance and other provident habits

## in the 'Fifties

among authors and artists." The net proceeds of the entertainment amounted to nearly £250.

At these rooms in 1856 Jenny Lind (Madame Goldschmidt) appeared at a grand concert; but her first appearance in Newcastle was in 1848, at the "Royal," in "La Sonnambula." The prices ranged for gallery 10s. 6d. up to £1 11s. 6d. dress boxes, and the house was crowded.

**Music Halls**, or Concert Halls as they were termed in the 'fifties, were very much on the small scale. Newcastle boasted of one only, kept by a man named John Balmbra, at the "Wheat Sheaf Inn," Cloth Market, at which place "Ned" Corvan, the celebrated composer and singer of local songs, was a great favourite. This room was on the first floor, and extended nearly to Grey Street, with stage facing west. Immediately in front of the stage were the best seats—boxes so called—and the remainder at a convenient price to suit the working classes. Mr. Balmbra conducted this place of amusement in a most creditable style. It has often been questioned if Corvan made his first appearance on a Newcastle stage at this place, so it may be as well to mention that "Ned" appeared first at an old structure left by a circus company at the west end of the Central Station, whereat the Buckley Minstrels, with "Old Bob Ridley," had a short run. Then Sayers and Heenan gave Newcastle an exhibition of boxing in 1860, after their great fight at Farnborough. Following the Buckleys

## A Peep at Newcastle

to Newcastle came the Butterworth Troupe, and thirdly the Christy Minstrels visited Newcastle frequently. Some years afterwards this old circus was converted by George Stanley into the Tyne Concert Hall, and was such a success that Mr. Joseph Cowen and Mr. Edward Glynn interested themselves in Mr. Stanley, and built the present Tyne Theatre in Westgate Road. We have now arrived at a stage when we must rest and contemplate—Whatever will “Canny Newcassel” be like in another fifty years?

“It is much easier to be critical than to be correct.”

—DISRAELI.



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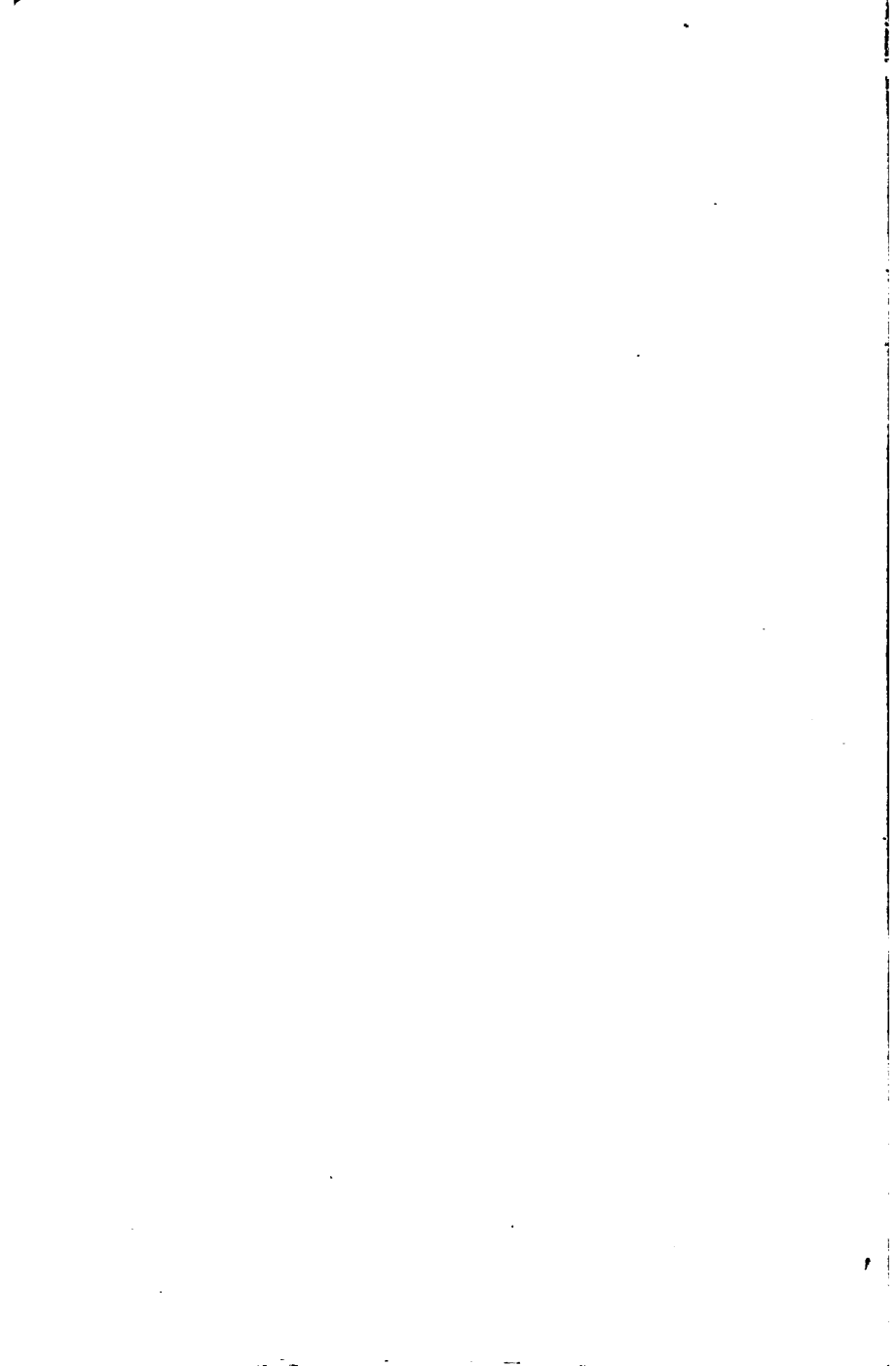
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